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THE  
CHRISTIAN TRAVELLER;

OR,

A SURE GUIDE TO SALVATION:

BEING A SERIES OF

DEVOUT TREATISES.

BY THOMAS À KEMPIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE IMITATION OF CHRIST," ETC



DUBLIN:

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THE  
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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THOMAS, commonly called "à KEMPIS," was born about the year of Christ, 1380, at Kempen, a little town in the territory of Cologne, upon the confines between the duchies of Cleves and Juliers; to the former of which it is said to have anciently belonged. His parents were of the meaner sort; but are recorded to have been persons of great piety. His father's name was John and his mother's Gertrude. The surname derived to him from his father was Hammerkin, or Hammerlein, (in English, Hammer, or Little Hammer).

When he was arrived to the age of thirteen, his parents sent him to Deventer, an university, and chief city of the province of Overijssel, where he studied in the house of the Clerks, under the inspection of the rector Florentius, by whom he was extremely beloved. And because of the great sincerity and simplicity which appeared in all his actions,

Florentius was so well pleased with him as to adopt him his son ; and as such he took delight to have our Thomas constantly near him : by which means, the whole care of his education, from the age of thirteen till twenty, continued with the good Florentius ; at which time, that holy man dying, left Thomas, as it were, an orphan. But before his death, he called for him, and had with him a long discourse, how he should dispose of himself. And Thomas having thereupon an earnest desire to retire from the world, and to devote himself wholly to the more immediate service of God, went to the mount of St. Agnes, which is just by the town of Zwoll, in the same province of Over-yssel, where was a little college of reformed regular Canons, of the order of St. Augustine, newly set up on the side of the river Vecht, and carried with him a letter from Florentius, written a little before his death, to recommend him for a member of that house.

This house was at that time very obscure, and little frequented by any body, which made it the more agreeable to him, who sought only where he might lie best hid, and have the enjoyment, at the same time, of two or three pious friends, with whom he could freely converse, concerning the things of heaven.

When he came thither, in the year 1400, he was received with abundance of joy and satisfaction, by his only brother John, who was become the first prior of this monastery ; and both of them burst out together into this heavenly exclamation, “ O how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ! ” Here he continued five years a

probationer, that so he might both moderate the earnestness of his zeal, and also thoroughly try how well such a sort of life would agree with him; for he foresaw the great danger of entering rashly into such a state, without all that caution and preparation, which both divine and human prudence do absolutely require. It was likewise a custom at that time, to try generally the candidates for so long a term, or at least till they were thoroughly proved and tried, before they were to take the habit upon them.

After this, in the sixth year, he took on him the habit of the Regulars of St. Austin in that place, and in the seventh bound himself by vow, being admitted to it on the 10th of June, 1406. This day was kept ever afterwards by him as a great sabbath and holy rest, with devotion more than ordinary, and renewed dedication of himself by an earnest and joyful confirmation of his most solemn vow to follow Christ steadfastly till death, and by this manner to express his utter contempt of the world, and also by praises and thanks giving for so particular a grace freely bestowed upon him, glorifying God in the deepest acknowledgment of his own demerits, and of the divine goodness. And in many places of his writings in general, as well as in that of the "Imitation of Christ," he has said such a world of fine things for that state of life which he then undertook, that if he that reads them be not made in love with it, it is, however, most plain that he was: moreover, being exceedingly fearful of his own frailty, he earnestly prayed that God would graciously preserve him in his good will and resolution to the end, and increase in him his grace day by day, that he might

live up perfectly to the profession he had made. God heard his prayer; nevertheless it was his pleasure that this good man should be thoroughly proved, for not only before his profession, but even after it, he underwent great desertions, temptations, aridities, and considerable pains. Notwithstanding all which he persisted earnestly in the exercises of his calling, and, as he himself saith—Silence was his friend, Labour his companion, and Prayer his auxiliary.

By the time he came to the age of thirty, though he industriously laboured to conceal himself all that was possible, he began to be eminent: for in or about the year 1410, there appeared some pieces abroad whereof he was believed to be the author, that were mightily read and approved. However, his name was not prefixed by him to any of them; so far was he from thoughts of acquiring a reputation in the church by what he had written. His manner generally was, only at the end of the books, by him either composed or copied, to subscribe his name in the usual form of the copyists. And as for those which it was no ways possible for him to conceal, he chose, instead of his own proper name, to publish them under the appellation of the Poor Pilgrim.

This Poor Pilgrim, then (for this was the name wherein he chiefly delighted), persisted here, in like manner as he had done at Deventer, in following the humble steps of a crucified Saviour; having bid defiance to the world and the allurements thereof. His piety towards God, his obedience towards his superiors, and his charity and brotherly kindness towards his colleagues, did here very conspicuously shine



forth. And whereas it was one of the principal occupations of the canons regular of the congregation to write the Bible, the writings of the ancients, and treatises of devotion, he not only applied himself earnestly to this labour, but animated others mightily to it; of which there are extant no few proofs, and particularly a fair large Latin Bible in four volumes, with some pieces of St. Bernard, transcribed by him, remain to this present time. In this employment also (wherein he was very skilful) he had exercised himself very much while at Deventer, and worked hard at writing, till he was able to repay the professors of academical sciences under whom he studied. And if anything remained, his custom was to put it into the common purse.

This good and devout father was a person of great affability, courtesy, and condescension, to the very weakest and lowest of Christians. He was a comforter to them that were in trouble; and to them that were under temptation, he was a most compassionate helper. And as he was a man exceeding zealous for the salvation of sou's, and one who did earnestly desire that all might be saved, even as he himself, so it was his main labour to draw others also with himself, by his writings, his verbal admonitions, his instructions, and all other ways and means which he was capable of using, into the kingdom of heaven. And because he began in his youth to gather riches, not the perishing mammon of unrighteousness, but durable substance, and to lay up the treasures of wisdom and righteousness, therefore he obtained a good name, which was as most precious ointment.

It is hardly possible to express with what an awful

reverence, and sense of divine majesty, he behaved when at church, or in the oratory. While he was singing of psalms, he always used to stand with his body erect; and, as if he was in an holy rapture, his face would be constantly lifted up, and fixed towards heaven, as one that was ravished with the incredible sweetness and deliciousness of the psalms. Nay, at some times as he was chanting them forth, they that were nearest to him, thought him to be in an ecstacy; for his countenance would seem to shine, as it were encompassed with light and glory, and he would but just touch the ground with the tip of his toes, the rest of his body being ready, as it were, to fly away from the earth into heaven, where his heart already was; while the fire of divine charity burned within him.

Moreover, he had such a veneration for the use of the Lord's Prayer, both in public and in private, that he would say, it not only excelled the prayers of all saints, but contained in itself effectually all the prayers, vows, and praises, that ever had been made, from the very foundation of the world, after an eminent manner. This he accounted a powerful means, under all depressions, to lift up the soul from earth to heaven, to make her ascend above the angels, and to unite her with God.

All his conversation was concerning God and the holy scriptures, which were his continual meditation. And if news or secular affairs were discoursed upon in his company, his custom was never to take the least notice of anything that was said, but to recollect himself as in the presence of God. Whereas, if God, or the things of another world, were the

subject of discourse, and he were desired by the company to declare his mind, then would he never fail to exert himself on such occasions—no one be more eloquent and powerful in words than he, for the good of others, and his Lord's glory. And he grew so famous for his most easy, and also most powerful way of delivering himself, that great numbers flocked to him, not only out of the neighbourhood, but out of the towns and villages lying round at a great distance.

It did often fall out, that as this good man was conversing with some of his fraternity, or walking abroad with them for the air, he would manifestly perceive God calling to him from within, by his heavenly inspirations; and then, modestly begging to be excused by them, he would leave them saying: "Indeed, I must be going; there is one waiting for me in my chamber." And so they accordingly granting his request, did take well his excuses, and were much edified thereby. Now what he then spake unto the Lord, and what the Lord again spake unto him, we have in that Treatise, which makes up the Third Book of the Imitation of Christ. He, sensible of the great advantage he reaped from this retirement and conversation with God, was so that he was much delighted with this his motto, which also he wrote in most, or all his books, viz. "I sought for rest, but found it not, except in little corners and in little books." As meaning thereby, to declare how and where the true rest of the soul is to be obtained; and that is, not in the throng of the world, but in retirement therefrom—not in great, but in small things—not in many and large volumes, but in a few and little books—and not in much reading, but in much recollection of the

spirit, and self-entertainment. And accordingly there was preserved, above an hundred years after his decease, a very much defaced picture of this venerable person, in the same house where he had lived, with this fore-mentioned inscription or motto.

He was chosen, much against his own inclination, Subprior while he was yet but young. And this was done by general consent, his seniors freely yielding to him, and preferring him to themselves, for his undoubted capacity to discharge an office in which so great prudence and experience were of necessity required. After this, he was chosen also Bursar or Treasurer; but because he was a person so much introverted and abstracted, and that consequently this office did too much take him off from heavenly contemplation, he prevailed to be dismissed from his bursar's employment; and instead thereof he was again chosen into the former of subrector, as being that which did more directly concern the spiritual state of the society. In consideration whereof, it was an act of mercy towards him in his brethren, to release him from all care concerning the outward things.

He wrote several treatises, which have been deservedly esteemed by all who have a true sense and relish of spiritual matters; a catalogue whereof is here subjoined.

1. Of the Imitation of Jesus Christ.
2. The Soliloquy of the Soul.
3. A little Rose Garden.
4. The Valley of Lilies.
5. Of the Three Tabernacles.
6. Of true Compunction.
7. Of the Discipline of Recluses.
8. The Erudition of a good Steward.
9. The Hospital of the Poor.
10. The Novices.
11. Spiritual Exercises.
12. The young Man's

Doctrinal. 13. Of Silence and Solitude. 14. Of Human Frailty. 15. The Manual of the Religious. 16. The Manual of the Little Ones. 17. Of the Elevation of the Mind, to the Search of the Supreme Good. 18. The consolation of the Poor. 19. Of Mortification. 20. Of Humility. 21. Of a Good and Peaceable Life. 22. The Life of a Good Monk. 23. Hymns, Prayers, and Songs. 24. Meditations. 25. Epistles. 26. Lives of Gerard the Great, Florentius, and some of his own Colleagues. 27. A Chronicle of the Monastery of Mount St. Agnes.—There is a great difference in the editions of his Works; some adding one or more of his pieces together, under one general title; and others separating them, as they judge most agreeable.

As for his person, he was of little stature, well proportioned, of a strong brown complexion, of a manly countenance, and of a quick piercing eye, which never grew dim; so that even to the last, he never used spectacles. He died July the 25th, in the year 1471, and of his age the ninety-second. His body was miraculously discovered in 1672, August 13.

## THE PROLOGUE

### TO THIS LITTLE BOOK.

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“The just shall spring as the lily, and his root shall spread forth before the Lord for ever.”—Osee xiv. 6.

This little book may be called the *Valley of Lilies*, to distinguish in from that which precedes it, under the title of the *Little Garden of Roses*: for as that treats of many virtues, which spring forth as fair *roses*, in the garden of *Jesus*, so this discourses of many other virtues, which as so many *lilies* of exceeding whiteness, are planted by our Lord *Jesus* in the valley of humility; where they are sweetly bedewed and fertilized by the inward infusion of the Holy Spirit. For according to the testimony of St. Gregory, to seek to acquire all other virtues, without humility, is to carry dust against the wind.

It is of these lilies that the spouse of Christ, out of the humility and devotion of her soul, speaketh, in the Canticle of Canticles, when wishing to declare the inward joy and consolation she experienced from the visit of the Divine Spouse, and the graces He had heaped upon her, she says: “I to my beloved, and my beloved to me, who feedeth among the lilies.”—(Cant. vi. 2—v. 10.) And again: “My beloved is white and ruddy.” “So shall he repose upon my bosom.”

To him be praise, honour, and glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

THE  
VALLEY OF LILIES.

---

CHAPTER I.

ON THE THREEFOLD STATE OF HUMAN LIFE.

“ I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys.”  
CANT. ii. 1.

1. This is the voice of Christ, to his holy Church in general, and to every devout soul in particular ; for Christ is the goodly and sovereign Spouse of the Church, and the head of all the faithful. He is the flower of all virtues, the lily of the valleys, the lover of humility and chastity.

If thou wouldst serve Christ, and please the Heavenly Spouse, overcome thy passions, gather the lilies of virtue, eschew idleness, study diligently, work at some useful manual labour, pray often for a more intimate union with God, turn away from the turmoil of the world, love retirement, and avoid all idle or hurtful conversation.



2. If virtue be not in thy heart, how seemly soever the outward habit, it is worth nothing in the sight of God. The vessel may be of fair proportions outwardly, but within it is empty.

Even as a vessel filled with good wine, exhales a pleasing odour, so from the good heart of a religious man, whose affections are pure, spring forth holy words and edifying works, which contribute to the glory of God, and the profit of his neighbour.

Weigh well, then, my brother, the great importance of the state in which thou art engaged, the outward marks of which thou bearest before the eyes of men, that so thou mayest study both to please God worthily, and to edify thy fellow-men by thy life and conversation ; ever remembering that whether thou dost good or evil, both are done in the sight of Him who will render to every one according to his works.

When therefore thou wilt eat or drink, when thou wilt sleep or take repose, when thou wilt follow the bent of thy desires, thou dost the works of the flesh, and thy conduct is like that of the beasts of the earth ; that wander about, that eat, drink, and fill their belly, till they are satisfied ; that butt with their horns, that tear with their claws or teeth, that scowl with threatening looks on those who resist them, and fill the air with hideous cries—such are carnal men, such the glutton, the miser, the proud, the passionate, and the brawler ; for the spirit of God is not in them, and they are subject to their passions only.

3. But when thou dost watch or pray, when thou wilt read or sing psalms and hymns to the glory of God and His saints, when thou wilt fast, and abstain



from vice, and make thyself useful to thy neighbour, when thou wilt mourn and weep over thy own disorders, or confess them, and supplicate pardon of God ; then thou dost the works of the Holy Spirit, follow His inspirations, and fulfil the duties of a religious life. Such conduct is like that of the angels in heaven, who ever sing the praise and glory of God, from whose face they never turn away.

But when thou wilt give way to sentiments of anger, when thou wilt nourish pride, when thou wilt give loose to detraction and murmuring, when thou wilt commit a fraud or practise lying, when thou wilt disturb others or rejoice over the evil that has happened to thy neighbour, when his prosperity afflicts thee, when thou despisest him in thy heart, or when thou labourest diligently for thy own interest only ; then thou followest the suggestions of the devil, and thy conduct, full of malice and teeming with disorder, resembles his : for that spirit of iniquity owns no counsellor but his passions, no motive but his perverseness. He does all the evil he can, or dare ; and because there is no good in him, he strives hard to seduce and pervert the sons of men.

The life of the just is like that of the angels, and the life of the carnal man like that of the beasts ; but the life of the proud is like that of devils.

Servants of God, take heed lest you fall into the snares which the spirits of malice lay for you ; for you will be accused by them at the awful tribunal of God, and there confounded.

## CHAPTER II.

OF THE PRAISE OF GOD DURING THE BARRENNESS OR  
TEPIDITY OF DEVOTION.

“The poor and needy shall praise thy name, O Lord !”  
Ps. lxxiii. 21.

1. If in prayer or holy meditation, thou shouldst fall into a state of dryness, coldness, or sadness, be sure not to give way to despair, or cease to call humbly on the name of Jesus.

But, in poverty of spirit, persevere in giving praise and thanksgiving to God ; and take comfort abundantly when reading these words : “The poor and needy shall praise thy name, O Lord !”

For many holy and devout souls have been proved by dryness, and seemed for a long while as it were abandoned by God, that they might thereby learn patience and compassion for others, by the sense of their own sorrow and need ; and not to presume too much on themselves in the moment of fervour, and in the season of spiritual jubilation.

Say with the Psalmist, “I am needy and poor.” (Ps. xix. 6.) In the Lord will I put my trust, for He is my strength and salvation, and all good comes from God.

2. Restrain thyself then from presumption when gladness is vouchsafed, and beware of discouragement when the clouds of sorrow gather around ; receive each of these as it shall please God to send them, and in all be content ; for thou hast nothing of good in thyself : all is from God.

When the grace of devotion is granted, the sun of

justice shines on thee from the heights of heaven; thy soul walks in brightness and rejoices in its riches. But if, permitting thyself to be deceived by any feeling of vanity or presumption, thou wilt confide on thy own strength, thou wilt indeed be wretched.

When the grace of devotion is withdrawn on account perhaps of the abuse made of it, thy soul becomes really poor and weak, capable of but very little, and with no relish for prayer; receive these privations with gratitude, for in withdrawing these gifts, and humbling thee with his elect, God giveth a new proof of His love. His hand strikes thee with the rod with which He corrects his children, for the hidden excesses and numberless acts of negligence of which thou art daily guilty, in order to inspire thee with a contempt for thyself, and to hinder thee from having so high an estimate of thy own merit; as St. Paul says, "Be not high-minded, but fear." (Rom. xi. 20.)

The soul is a great gainer when deeply penetrated with a sense of self-contempt, it gives entirely to God all the glory of the good it may have done.

---

### CHAPTER III.

ON THE PROBATION OF THE JUST BY ADVERSITY.

"Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just."—PSALM xxxii. 3.

1. Joy is eternal in heaven; sorrow is eternal in hell: both dwell occasionally on earth, to prove the good and the bad.

The sky is pure and serene in summer, dark and cloudy in winter ; so also is it with the devout soul : —when the grace of God comes and illuminates it, it discovers many truths which were before unknown, and understands what before it understood not. It rejoices with great joy, and expresses in songs of gladness, the happiness which it feels. But the season of trial comes at last, and the grace of devotion is withdrawn ; then winter comes, in ice and cold, in the gloom of the intellect and fear of soul. Then patience, most needful to our wants as it is pleasing to God, comes to our aid ; in such trials our advance in virtue grows apace, and by patience will our eternal recompense hereafter be increased.

2. The chastisements of God humble and purify the soul, confound our pride, and dissipate all vainglory.

So long as the soul is united to the body, so long does God prove man, in turn, under both relations, that he may make greater progress in the love of Christ.

Wherefore it is a proof of great knowledge and virtue, to profit by adversity as well as prosperity.

Bless, then, O my soul, bless the Lord, at all times. Sing, O Sion, day and night, the praises of the Lord, and thy reward shall be great in the sight of God, in heaven and on earth ; for all shall tend to thy spiritual advantage, whether prosperity or adversity, good or evil, joy or sorrow. Whence the apostle saith : “ We know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good ; ” (Rom. viii. 28) and nothing shall ever be wanted to those that fear Him. Blessed are they who in all things follow the will of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

## OF THE TRUE LOVER OF GOD.

“O love the Lord, all ye his saints.”—Ps. xxx. 24.

1. Love Him, rich and poor, love Him, great and small; for it is He who made both poor and rich, both small and great.

He that would truly love God, must love Him purely; that is to say, must love God for God, and with no other wish but that of enjoying Him alone. Such love must have for its end neither temporal advantage nor profit, nor inward consolation—no—not even eternal recompense; but wholly and entirely for His infinite goodness and surpassing worth.

It is for this reason that the Psalmist, inviting us to sing the praises of God, says and repeats so often, “Give glory to the Lord, for He is good;” (Ps. cv.)—words which are indeed sweet to such as love God;—but, for the consolation of the contrite and repentant mourner, he adds—“For His mercy endureth for ever.”

Ye weak and frail, taste ye the sweetness of these words;—whatever be your sins, despair not, “For His mercy endureth for ever.”

2. The deeper our humility, and the more fervent our love, the more pleasing shall we be to God.

Blessed is he that accounteth himself the vilest of creatures, and who shuns everything contrary to the will of God.

Blessed is he, who, out of charity and with a pure intention, does every action for God, and with a view to please Him ; and who proposes to himself no other end, than His honour, praise, and glory.

Blessed is he who attributes nothing that he possesses to his own merits, but freely returns to God all that he has received from Him.

---

## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE GRATITUDE OF THE SOUL FOR EVERY GOOD.

“ O magnify the Lord with me ; and let us extol his name together ”—Psalm xxxiii.

1. He that for the least favour, is most grateful to God, gives Him worthy praise, and appreciates the goodness and bounty of Him, who above all is infinitely great ; for no grace can be small or contemptible, that comes from the liberal hand of the Most High.

God seeks and asks for nothing, but that our love may be disinterested ; and that by carefully avoiding all offence against Him, we should everywhere and always give proofs to Him of our sincere gratitude.

2. Great in the sight of God is he, who is filled with deep humility, and contempt for himself—who judges himself unworthy to partake in His gifts and benefits, and when he makes use of such as he has received, seeks neither to satiate his vanity, nor to court the esteem of men.

But greater is he, who, although like Job, afflicted, overwhelmed with contempt and injuries, despoiled of his goods, abandoned by his friends, tempted by the devil, loaded with derision, and covered with confusion,—yet rejoices in tribulation, giving thanks to God, and blessing His holy name; reckons as great gains to his soul, the evils and calamities which weigh heavy upon him; and endures them all without murmur, for the love of God.

3. Blessed is he, who after the example of Job, learns to acknowledge the hand which strikes him, and to submit with pious resignation to the rod of affliction: trusting wholly to the mercy of God, and bowing unreservedly to His holy will.

Blessed is he who ever seeks after, and prefers before all, the will of God, and who takes pleasure in being accounted vile in the eyes of man:—who rejoices in the midst of insult and injury, and who receives temporal losses as ministering servants to the good of his soul.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ON THE CONFORMITY OF THE DEVOUT SOUL TO THE CROSS.

“I am with him in tribulation.”—PSALM xc. 15.

1. *The faithful Soul.*—Lord, what mean those words that I hear? “Give to thy servant a right understanding;”—unfold to me all the consolation these words inclose.

*The Lord.*—Hearken unto Me, my son.

When thy heart is fallen into tribulation or



anguish of soul, then art thou fastened with Jesus to His cross.

When consolations return in the fervour of devotion, and thou art constrained to express thy joy, by the singing of hymns and holy canticles, then art thou raised again with Jesus, in newness of spirit; then dost thou rise again from the dead, singing alleluias of joy.

2. When on bended knees, thou implorest pardon of thy sins, lamenting and deploring them in the bottom of thy heart; then with repeated blows, thou knockest loudly at the gate of heaven.

When turning away from the vanities of the world, thou givest thyself up entirely to the meditation of the good things of eternity; then thou mountest to heaven with Jesus, to live there in the company of the angels.

Be then meek, humble, and resigned to the infirmities and reverses which may come upon thee in the service of God; patiently bear thy cross, with Jesus; die daily on the cross, for thy eternal salvation; for every affliction of the flesh, when borne with patience, is a remedy for the evils of the soul, a satisfaction for sins, and the hope of future blessedness and glory. Amen.

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## CHAPTER VII.

ON THE WALKING OF A PURE SOUL WITH GOD.

“Walk whilst you have the light.”—JOHN xii. 35.

1. He walketh with God, whilst there is light, who



has no desire for what this world affords ; and who fixes all his affections on God in heaven : for the hidden treasure of the faithful soul is Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom all goodness dwells.

He is always in indigence and want, however great his riches, who has not God for his friend : but he that would have God for his friend, must love Him, and keep His commandments.

2. He keeps the commandments of God, who avoids all idle and useless words ; who shows by his works, an example of those virtues he recommends in practice ; when, instead of seeking his own glory, he refers all the glory and the good he may do, or observe in others, purely and entirely to the glory of God.

But he that is satisfied with himself, pleases a fool, and displeases God.

Thus in all the good thou sayest or dost, seek only the glory of God, that thou mayest receive from Him still greater favours.

Why shouldst thou glory in natural advantages, whereas thou art a mere mortal, and must shortly become the food of worms ?

Young man, hear the voice of an ancient ; separate thyself from all that might allure thy soul to idleness and distraction ; for thou shalt find repose only by descending into thy heart, and disposing it to seek God before all things, and to love Him intimately.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE PEACE OF HEART, AND REST IN GOD.

“His place is in peace.”—Ps. lxxv. 3.

1. *The faithful Soul.*—Lord, who is he that dwelleth in true peace?

*The Lord.*—He that is meek and humble of heart. But why dost thou seek to inquire into the state of others, while thou neglectest thyself in many things?

Hearken then unto me; it is the heart the most humble, and the most willing to suffer for the sake of God, that enjoys the most abundant peace.

To such a one no burthen is heavy, for he hath God himself in his heart.

Blessed are they that converse with God in prayer—in meditation—by sacred songs—by reading; and who keep silence on the vanities of the passing world.

Wherever thou art, wheresoever thou goest, whithersoever thou fliest, thy thoughts still accompany thee; but pious meditation brings joy to the soul, while evil thoughts afflict it.

Anger brings forth trouble, and envy blinds the soul; but hatred kills it.

Devout reading instructs; prayer inflames; but good works are the fulfilment of the law.

2. Holy words purify the heart; frivolous words defile it; idle words scandalize it; bitter words sadden it; words of mercy soothe disquietude; moral

conversation edifies the heart; learned or dogmatic entertainments strengthen the faith, and heavenly words elevate it to the throne of the Divinity.

Cleanse then thy heart from all malice, if thou wouldst enjoy sweet peace.

There is no sweet peace but what comes from God, and dwells in the virtuous soul, which performs all things well for the sake of God whom it loves.

Abide in silence, and endure a little for the sake of God; and He himself will free thee from every burthen, and from all disquietude.

A holy life and a pure conscience beget confidence in God in tribulation and death: but an evil conscience is always in fear, always at war—tormented by remorse.

The angry man falls quickly from one evil into a worse; but the patient and the meek makes a friend of his enemy, and God will be propitious to him, for that he hath shewn mercy unto him who offended him.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### ON RECOLLECTION OF THE HEART WITH GOD.

“He who gathereth not with me, scattereth,”—saith our Lord Jesus Christ.—MATT. xii. 30.

1. When through the multiplied temptations of the evil one, the bitter passions of thy own heart or annoyances from thy fellow-men, thou shalt have fallen into lukewarmness, dissipation, or distraction of

mind, retire into solitude, and there prostrate and alone at the foot of the Holy Cross, or before the image of the blessed Virgin Mary, or any other picture consecrated either to the honour of God, or the memory of His saints, use thy endeavour to calm and gather up thy soul by reciting the Lord's Prayer, and the Angelical Salutation.

Invoke especially Jesus and Mary, beseech the holy angels, and all the heavenly court, to obtain a return of the graces and consolations of which thou hast been deprived, and say with holy David, "Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hidden from thee."—(Ps. xxxvii. 10.) Lord, from my youth I have put my hope in Thee; unto Thee I fly in my tribulation.

#### A DEVOUT PRAYER.

Teach me, O Lord, ever to follow Thy commandments, to do Thy will, and to renounce my own: for this is well-pleasing to Thee, and indispensably necessary to the safety of my soul.

O Lord, may I never think, nor desire, nor do any thing displeasing to Thee, or injurious to my neighbour:—never act contrary to what Thou hast commanded me, or thy devout and faithful servants.

If I transgress, correct me in thy mercy, and destroy me not in thy wrath.

Because thou art my God, and I am Thy servant—ever poor—ever weak—and ever most needy of Thy grace and mercy in all things.

Blessed be Thy holy name above all, now and for ever more! Amen.

## CHAPTER X.

## ON WATCHING AND PRAYER AGAINST TEMPTATIONS.

“Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation,”—either of the flesh, or of the spirit, of the world, or the devil.—MATTH. xiv. 38.

1. The flesh excites us to concupiscence, the spirit to pride, the world to vanity, the devil to envy: but Christ hath taught us quite the contrary. He exhorts us to practise chastity, humility, charity, and contempt for the world; if we would avoid the pains of hell and deserve the kingdom of heaven.

To this end we must watch and pray, at all times and in every place; for no part is secure against the attacks of our malignant enemy, who sleeps not, nor rests from his temptations, “who continually goes about seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Pet. v. 8.)—whom he may cast into trouble and discouragement, and whom he may inspire with disgust for prayer, or other spiritual exercises.

2. It is for this reason that our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing the malice of the evil one, the efficacy of prayer, the strength of the enemy, and the weakness of man, admonishes, in the most earnest manner, his disciples, and all the faithful, to watch and pray, if they would not be overcome by their enemies—that is, their vices.

Watch ye then and pray, that ye enter not into the temptations of the devil, nor consent unto him.

If thou art unable to recite the whole psalter or other long prayers, recite a psalm, a verse, a devout hymn in honour of Jesus, of Mary, or of some of the blessed saints, that thou mayest raise up thy soul to God, by the groanings of thy heart or the holy words thy mouth may utter.

For God is nigh unto all them that call upon Him in humility; and "the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds," (Eccles. xxxv. 21.)—shall fill the soul with trust in God, and thwart the schemes, the efforts, the threats, and the vanities of the devil.

3. If the presence of men keep thee from prayer, "Enter," according to the council of Jesus Christ, "into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy father in secret," (Matt. vi. 6.) who already knoweth the thoughts and desires of thy heart, and of what thou hast need.

Say unto Him, then, every time thou wilt address Him in prayer,—“Father! Thy will be ever done, and not mine; grant me nothing but what may be conformable to Thy glory, and the good of my soul.

When thou art in choir with thy brethren, or in church with the faithful, read and sing with a recollection like that of the angels before the throne of God.

Sing in such a manner that thy heart may be inwardly penetrated with compunction, and that thou mayest please men without displeasing God and His holy angels; for God prefers compunction of heart to a loud or tuneful voice.

God is appeased by humble prayer, but offended by vain glory.

The groanings of a contrite heart draw down the grace of God, and impart strength to virtue; but the song of a wandering heart quenches devotion: for all such faults and negligences we must give a strict account.

May the divine mercy keep us from all such offences, and lead us to the kingdom of heaven! Amen.

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## CHAPTER XI.

ON THE FEAR OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, AS A PRESERVATIVE AGAINST THE VICES OF THE FLESH AND PRIDE OF SPIRIT.

“Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear.”—Ps. cxviii. 120.

1. Such a prayer is good to repress the evil inclinations of the flesh, and humble the pride of the spirit; because these two enemies fight against man and harass him daily: for either the flesh torments him by its irregular appetites, or the spirit seeks the praise of men:—applying its own good works to the gratification of vanity.

Both of these enemies are great evils, and from either side there is imminent peril.

When thou art drawn to evil, by that miserable flesh, so shortly doomed to be the prey of death, think of the torments of eternal fire. Thus shalt thou extinguish the fires of concupiscence, by thinking on those of hell: for it is happily ordered that impressions more feeble should disappear before those which



are stronger, that the soul may be saved "so as by fire."—(1 Cor. iii. 15.)

Short is the duration of all carnal pleasure :—beauty of body, glory, honours—all the enjoyments of this world are vain and deceitful.

As a violent headache forces complaints and groans even from the thoughtless and the negligent, so the fear of death, and the dread of the punishment of hell, cause the man subject to his passions, to resist temptation, and abstain from sins.

2. He that is without fear, shall quickly fall into evil : and he that refuses to humble himself, in the presence of God and His saints, shall be confounded by devils in the day of judgment, and cruelly tormented by them for ever.

Listen to an irrevocable decree, applicable to every creature—to angels as well as to men :—"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—(Jas. iv. 6.)

But the mercy of the Lord is with His saints and elect, from eternity unto eternity.

Tremble, then, proud man, at the judgment of God in all thy actions, and cease to glory in the vanity of a passing reputation.

When thou hast done all that thou canst, and all that thou oughtst to have done, there yet remain many things, and scarcely couldst thou restore one for a thousand.

Tremble then at the rod and staff of God's vengeance—tremble on account of the judgment to come.

Every virtue shall be rewarded, but every bad action shall be punished.



If fire were to break out in thy dwelling, wouldst thou not fear?—wouldst thou not rise on the instant and fly? Such is the effect that ought to be produced in thy soul by the fear, and dread, and thoughts of the pains to come, which shall never end; and whoever entertains in his heart a lively horror—a salutary dread—of the punishment of hell, shall thereby overcome lukewarmness, and rekindle his fervour.

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## CHAPTER XII.

ON THE MEMORY OF OUR LORD'S PASSION, AS A  
REMEDY AGAINST DISSIPATION OR DISTRACTION  
OF MIND.

“Blessed are those who weep, for they shall be comforted.”  
MATT. v. 3.

1. By whom shall they be comforted? most surely by Christ—in the secret of the heart, and not by the world with its vain consolations and idle frivolities.

Light and trifling discourses, pleasant jests, and frequent laughter, have no agreement with the sacred passion and bitter sufferings of Christ.

Were my head or my back wounded, even by one of those sharp thorns which formed the crown of Jesus Christ, would I laugh and be merry? no, surely, but rather weep and cry aloud through pain.

Were my foot pierced by one of the nails which

fastened Jesus to the cross, whither could I go, or whither could I run? Doubtless I could neither go nor run any where: I would lay me down in sorrow, and learn by the experience of pain, to mourn over the sufferings of my divine Saviour.

Happy should I be, if the abundance and bitterness of my tears could then efface my sins.

Oh! how holy is the grief we feel, and how sweet the tears we shed, when we weep over the sacred wounds of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. Whenever, then, thou art in distress, or assailed by any temptation, or on the point of yielding to some concealed wickedness, arm thyself forthwith with the shield of prayer, and the standard of the Holy Cross; take refuge in the sacred wounds of Christ, and there in the fervour of prayer and in serious meditation on His passion, find a salutary remedy for all the wants of thy soul.

Consider well the ponderous, high, and heavy cross, on which Jesus Christ hung naked;—fastened and transpierced with nails, for the love of thee.

Behold his crown;—count there the numerous thorns which pierced so sadly his sacred head, and bedewed it abundantly with his sacred blood.

Place these, as well as the other instruments used in the passion of Jesus Christ, beside thee as a safeguard by day and night: lest thy malignant enemy, the devil, finding thy mind stripped of these sacred representations, enter in and pollute thy heart with vain thoughts and dangerous suggestions.

3. Let not therefore thy bed be laid in softness: in memory of the holy nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, think of that crib, poor and narrow but

replete with all virtues, where Jesus was born, and where were heard His infant cries. He had no ornament for His cradle but a little straw, and no nourishment but a little milk from his Virgin Mother.

Let the hardness and poverty of thy couch recall in some sort the hard and stony sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ; crucified for thy sake, truly dead and buried in the bosom of the earth, and covered with a great stone.

There, then, seek repose, in the peace of the Lord, forgetting the world and all its vanities; despising all that is reckoned great and pleasing in the eyes of men; that rising with him from thy slumber thou mayst come forth refreshed in virtue and grace, and at the last day be raised again to share in the eternal glory of the elect. Amen.

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## CHAPTER. XIII.

ON THE INVOCATION OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS AND  
OF THE BLESSED MARY, HIS VIRGIN MOTHER.

“O Lord, My God, direct my way in thy sight.”—Ps. v. 9.

1. Thy ways, O Lord Jesus Christ, are beautiful and pure; and to those that walk therein, thy paths are safe, and right, and perfect.

All thy paths are peaceful and holy, and lead the faithful and humble of heart to the kingdom of heaven.

Wherever thou mayst go, or mayest direct thy steps, wherever thou shalt rest or sojourn, call upon

Jesus, call upon Mary, His holy Mother ; with confidence repeat these words of the Psalmist, as the guide of thy way ; "Direct, O Lord, my way in thy sight : " then add the following—"Perfect thou my goings," O Jesus, "in thy paths, that my footsteps be not moved," to behold vanity, or to wound my soul, by words of idleness.

2. Next let this comfortable prayer be for thy life's viaticum—a provision for thy journey—let it be as a staff for thy firm support—say it often, say it devoutly :—

"Jesus and Mary, be ever with me in the way as my good guards at all times and in every place lest I wander in bye-paths ; lest my senses or my heart be seduced by the many allusions within and without."

This holy prayer, "Jesus and Mary," is short, easily remembered, and carried about without inconvenience ; it is sweet and pleasing to the mind ; the poor pilgrim who flies from the vanities of the world, will find in it the consolation, strength, and protection which he is in need of, to hold on his course in safety ; it will refresh the fatigue of the journey, and calm the disquietude of his soul ; it will fill him with comfort, and aid him mightily in resisting the obstacles which he may meet with ; and it will help to lead him by a path direct to life eternal.

This holy prayer is addressed to surer companions, and a more powerful escort, than all the kings and princes of this world, and to higher saints than all the saints in heaven or on earth.

This prayer spoken fervently will aid in procuring the favour of all the court of heaven ; who with all reverence, ever follow Jesus Christ their Lord, and

Mary, their holy lady, the blessed mother of Jesus, most worthy of all praise, and of the homage and benediction of all created things.

He that has these for his companions in his earthly pilgrimage, shall find in them devoted and zealous patrons in the hour of death.

Never depart from Jesus and Mary on earth, if thou wouldst live and rejoice with Jesus and Mary for ever in heaven.

Thy steps will be more secure, with less fear of wandering, if thou hast Jesus and Mary in thy heart; if they be the object of thy praise, thy benediction, thy applause, thy transports, thy cries of delight, the joy of thy heart, thy tears and sighs, thy aim, thy embraces, thy regards, and thy adoration.

3. Blessed are those who call on Jesus and Mary continually—who salute them devoutly—who recall them lovingly to their memory—who honour them above all—who sing their praise with lively joy—who glorify them to the utmost height—who love them ardently—who make their love the delight of their souls—and who deem it happiness to sing and celebrate their names for ever.

Oh, how sweet is Jesus! how sweet is holy Mary, his beloved mother.

Blessed is the pilgrim, who in the time of his exile, is ever mindful of the celestial country; where Jesus and Mary are surrounded by angels and saints in joy ineffable and glory without end.

Blessed is the pilgrim, who seeks no dwelling-place on earth, who desires “to be dissolved and to be with Christ in heaven.”

Blessed are the poor and needy, who every day

beggeth the bread of heaven, and who ceases not to stretch forth his suppliant hands, till he receives the crumbs which fall from the table of his Lord.

Blessed is he that is invited to the supper of the Lamb, who here below receives the sacrament of His love and waits in patience until called to sit down to the banquet in heaven.

4. Because, as often as a person receives the communion devoutly, or as often as the priest reverently and devoutly offers to the honour of God the holy sacrifice; so often does he sit at the table with Jesus, and his blessed Mother, to eat and drink spiritually with them.

Such a one is the disciple of Jesus, the minister of the blessed Virgin Mary, the companion of the angels, the fellow-citizen of the Apostles, the servant of God, and is nearly allied to the saints, and the intimate friend of Heaven.

He flies the tumult of the world; he turns away from idle talk; he meditates on the words of Jesus, and watches carefully over his heart and affections, that no thought may enter there to offend Jesus, or Mary, or the saints.

“He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Saviour:” (Psalm. xxiii. 5.) Whosoever he shall call upon Him, He shall hear him from His holy heaven—wheresoever he may be, and whatsoever danger may oppress him.

For the disciples were on the sea, in danger of sinking, and they called on Jesus, and Jesus appeared forthwith, and said to them, “Why are ye fearful?” (John vi. 20.) “Be of good heart, it is I, fear ye not.” (Matt. xiv. 27.)



The voice of Jesus is a voice full of sweetness to bring consolation; of power to protect; of joy to make the soul glad; of indulgence to pardon, and of grace to lead to life eternal.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE NECESSITY OF STRUGGLING MANFULLY AGAINST VICE, AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF THE SAINTS.

“Do ye manfully, and let your heart be strengthened.”—  
Ps. xxx. 25.

1. As the passion and cross of Jesus, and the sufferings of the martyrs, teach us to bear the pains and crosses of this life; so the purity of the blessed Virgin Mary, the chastity of the holy virgins, widows and saints of God, show how we may overcome temptations of the flesh, despise the riches, fly the honours, and renounce all the vanities of the world, to give ourselves up entirely to the love and pursuit of heavenly things.

O servant of God, walk in the footsteps of those courageous souls, who have given thee the example of invincible patience:—like them, resist the devil and all his temptations.

Consider the unshaken constancy of weak and delicate virgins, and learn from them to despise and cast from thee with contempt, all sensual pleasures, and every other vice.

If God in his mercy has granted thee temporal riches—thou who art nothing—use not these to

satiate vanity, fix not on them thy foolish heart; for thou knowest not how soon thou mayest be taken away from them, nor how long thou mayest enjoy them.

Ask not long life;—seek rather for a good and pious one;—for the witness of a good conscience is better than all the treasures of this world:—because the greater thy riches on earth, the more rigorous the account to be rendered in heaven.

Ah! how deceitful is the favour of this world! how short its glory! for after the enjoyment of its riches, its honours, its dignities, and its delights, come the tears and groans, and dreadful punishments of hell, whence, alas! there is no redemption.

But oh! how great is the happiness of the elect! they are with God, with his angels and saints; inebriated with a happiness which comprehends all joys, and shall never end.

Happy men and wise virgins! oh! how happy ye!—who have renounced all for the love of Christ, anxiously endeavouring to walk in the narrow path that leads to the eternal kingdom.

3. Learn, then, faithful and devout servants of Jesus Christ, that during this life, ye must watch, and pray, and fast, and labour, and fight against the divers temptations of the flesh and the spirit.

The flesh must be mortified, lest it rise and lust against the spirit;—lest it seduce the soul, and, prevailing over it, draw it down to hell.

To what purpose is the body pampered delicately in this world, if when it quits this passing life, it must endure hell's fearful torments?

And what boots it to be praised and honoured



by men here on earth, and so soon afterwards to be humbled and condemned to dwell eternally with the spirit of darkness, and the impious sons of the evil one?

To enjoy the reputation of a great and learned man in this world, and to be counted in the number of the elect, is a subject of shame and confusion in the eyes of God and his saints: but to suffer for Christ, and to be despised by the wicked for his sake, is high honour, praise, and glory supreme with God and all his saints.

Hence the words of consolation which Jesus Christ addresses to his disciples, and to all who suffer injury or distress for his sake:—"Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.—Matt. v. 11, 12.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### ON THE LOVE OF RETIREMENT AND HOLY PERSEVERANCE.

"Be ye stedfast in the work of the Lord always."—1 Cor.  
xv. 58.

1. Answer me, my dear brother, what advantage dost thou find towards thy sanctification by hurrying hither and thither—by hearing and seeing many and various things, which of a certainty, tend to exclude from the kingdom of heaven?

Blessed is he that lives in retirement and recol-

lection, who enters into himself, who keeps a strict watch over his heart and body, and who asks pardon of God with sighs and tears for his frequent distractions.

Woe to you, who so often and so heedlessly mix in the vain bustle of the world, who shun solitude, who waste unprofitably a portion of your precious time, and who thereby cause scandal to others.

Inward peace is laid up abundantly for him who loveth solitude—who gives his heart in secret to God, who prays frequently—who is employed in useful occupations—who feeds his soul with Sacred Scriptures and other holy studies, and meditates with ardent affection, on the truths of salvation.

2. The idler and the babbler deserve severe reproof, and their fellowship must be shunned, lest they corrupt the simple by the frivolity of their discourse; or, by the irregularity of their manners, bring trouble and scandal into the souls of the little ones.

Oh! brother, oh! thou whose heart is dissipated and fond of idle jests, dread the pains of purgatory; where, for every act of trifling, every idle word or evil thought, thou must be punished by bitter stripes from infernal tormentors.

It is much better then to live here in fear and trembling, in penance and tears, than to share the lot of the reprobate hereafter, and to be tormented together with them, by devils for all eternity.

There is surely no joy nor mirth in the fire of hell, whence none can ever draw thee out.

3. He that would reflect often on these truths, and seriously meditate thereon, would soon conceive a disgust for all worldly vanities, and abhor all

sensual desires ; so that he might avoid eternal punishment, and after death obtain eternal happiness.

But woe unto those on earth, and heavier woe to come, on those who are but lightly moved by the thought of the divine judgments, and by the fear of sufferings which their body has not yet experienced.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### ON DIVINE CONSOLATION IN TRIBULATION FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

“ In the world you shall have distress ; but have confidence, I have overcome the world.”—JOHN xvi. 33.

1. “ It is a comfort to have a companion in misery,” saith the proverb. But who is that friend so affectionate and so good, who shares our miseries and sympathizes in our infirmities ? That friend is Jesus Christ our Lord, who suffered and was crucified for us ; and who, in the gospel, calls himself the physician and shepherd of our souls, the comforter of the poor, the weak, and the afflicted ; the physician of the sick, and the stay of those that fall ; for “ they that are well,” says he, “ have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. (Mark ii. 17.) And in like manner David speaks of him, when he addresses these words of comfort to afflicted souls, “ the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart ;”—(Ps. xxxiii. 19.) and in another psalm, to give confidence to his servant, proved by temptations and tribulations, God himself says, “ I am with

him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him.”—(Ps. xc. 15.)

Truly there is much comfort and consolation to all that are sad or afflicted with many calamities; where as Christ was himself tempted and afflicted and stricken with many sorrows, for our sake.

2. God, who is sovereignly good and just in all his ways, would not send pains and tribulations in this life, if they were not useful and salutary to our souls.

And who art thou, sinner, who art thou, loaded with many sins? who art thou who wilt dare in affliction, to wince under the hand of him, who spared not his own? for it is meet and just that the guilty and unprofitable servant should bear without murmuring the light corrections which his master inflicts on him; since his well-beloved Son, and he all innocence, was wounded with so many stripes.

It is meet and just that a sick man, anxious to recover his health, should sip some drops from the bitter chalice, which already his physician—who required no such remedy—had drained before him, to neutralize the mortal poison, with which humanity had been so deeply infected, and to cure perfectly and free from eternal death, erring man, whom sin had deprived of life spiritual, as well as corporal.

The heavy burthen of the servant should be much alleviated by the remembrance of the heavier burthen of sorrows that his innocent master has borne: and the sick should be much comforted in his sufferings, when he reflects that these, if borne with resignation, shall serve to cleanse him from all sins, and to assure his hope of life eternal.

3. It is, indeed, great and glorious for a poor slave to be clothed with the same cloth as his master; and to wear, as son and heir, the royal purple that will give a title to assist at the eternal spousals of the Lamb.

The cloth with which Jesus is clothed, is humility of heart, self-denial, the privation of necessary things, patience in adversity, and perseverance in virtue.

He that receives with gratitude the chastisements which God inflicts on him, finds in his sorrows, the safety of his soul, and shall receive in heaven a fairer crown of glory.

“Blessed is he that understandeth, concerning the needy and the poor.”—(Ps. xi. 1, 2.) Jesus, who though richer than all, willed, for the love of us, to become needy and poor. Blessed is he that, despising the riches and ease of this life, walks wisely in His footsteps, and takes up his cross daily to the hour of his death for the safety of his soul.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

ON WATCHING OVER THE CONSCIENCE, IN EVERY PLACE AND AT ALL TIMES.

“My soul is continually in my hands.”—Ps. cxviii. 109.

1. Nothing is more useful or more salutary for one desirous of attaining eternal life, than to meditate continually on the salvation of his soul.

Open every book of piety—run through all the

treatises on the spiritual life, the soul will find no salvation but in God, and in a virtuous life.

Hence the Lord and Redeemer of souls said to his disciples, "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul."—(Matthew xvi. 26.)

He that meditates often on these words, and who is more seriously concerned for the welfare of his soul than for the increase of his fortune, or for the entertainment of his body, is a merchant truly wise; (Matt. xiii. 45.) for he prefers spiritual riches, which perish not, to the perishable goods of earth.

He is one of those good and faithful servants of Christ, who makes his two talents four, his five ten; and who on receiving only one, instead of hiding it in the earth, laying it apart, throwing it away, or treating it with contempt, distributes it to the poor, that he may have part in their prayers; or offers it at the altar of God, returning thanks to the Lord, for the smallest benefits received.—Matt. xxv. 14, 15, *et infra*.

Blessed is the good servant who is faithful in a little, (Luke xix. 17,) who employs every moment of his life in a useful manner; who is not busied in what concerns him not, and who, to please God, becomes like one that is deaf and dumb. He walks in peace through the tumult of the world, "having his soul continually in his hands."

Take no thought, then, of the conduct of thy neighbour, but in as far as the love of God and charity may require.

2. Covet not the praises of men, for they are vain. Be not afraid of their reproach; for, far from hurting

my soul, humiliations purify, and make it worthy to receive in heaven a more brilliant crown; and none deserve to be glorified in the kingdom of heaven who cannot endure reproach for the love of God on earth.

#### A MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

Since then thou hast suffered for the love of me, O my God, it is but fitting that I should suffer for the love of thee; and that I should walk in thy footsteps as far as I am able.

Thou hast said to St. Peter, "Follow thou Me," (John xxi. 22.) but alas! how little can I bear for thee!

I make my resolutions, but scarcely one in ten do I execute: my words are many, but my works are few; all blame is mine; there is no excuse; idleness and indifference increase each day the number of my sins. What should I think or say on these offences? alas! nought remains but to entreat thy mercy, and to cry, "Lord, I have sinned, have mercy on me."

Thus were led all the saints that have gone before us; such are the lessons they have left us; such each day is still the conduct of all thy faithful.

Oh, all ye saints and friends of God, pray for me; for I am weak and indigent, and I humbly implore the assistance of all.

#### THE PRAYER OF THE POOR.

O thou Holy of holies, O Lord my God, incline thine ear to the prayer of Thy poor servant; "Help me, and I shall be saved, and I will meditate always on thy justifications." (Ps. cxviii. 117.)



Oh that I may deserve to be one of the least of thy servants, in the kingdom which thou hast prepared for those who are humble and who love thee.

I will love thee then, O Lord, my strength, with all my heart, as thou thyself hast commanded by thy sacred mouth.

Thou art my hope, and my salvation, and my desire is ever towards thee.

Keep me from all error, by a clear understanding—from all impurity by a clean heart—from all kind of doubt, by a right faith—from all distrust, by a steadfast hope—from all disgust and negligence, by an ardent charity—from all disquietude by invincible patience—from all unclean thoughts by holy meditation—from the attacks of the devil, by continual prayer—from frequent distractions, by a sustained attention in reading—from listlessness and drowsiness, by useful occupation—and from thinking of satisfying my vices by the remembrance of thy holy passion. Come with all these graces, O Lord, and confirm me in all thy holy words. Amen.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ON SOLITUDE AND SILENCE.

“Lo, I have gone far off, flying away, and I abode in the wilderness.”—PSALM liv. 8.

1. And why?—because of the numerous advantages which will come to my soul in so doing; as well as to guard and restrain my heart from the



various distractions with which the world allures the senses.

What the eye has not seen, or the ear has not heard, can neither excite our regret, nor trouble the peace of our soul.

Solitude and silence therefore are profitable to inward peace, and dispose us for the gift of fervent prayer ; and it is much more easy to find solitude and silence in the retirement of the closet, than in the tumult of the world.

As the fish soon dies when taken out of the water, so a pious man, who allows himself to be carried away by the world, speedily yields to distraction and becomes sullied in soul.

The wise bee abandons the flower as soon as it has gathered the honey, and returns with joy to deposit in its hive, the provisions that are to nourish it in the dearth of winter ; wherefore it lays up carefully in its cell the treasure of its sweetness, before it resumes its airy course, lest it lose the fruit of its labours. For precious perfumes become more sweet by being put in a close vessel, but lose, in a little time, all their virtue when exposed to the open air.

Flowers in like manner, long preserve their beauty in the enclosure of a garden, whose walls protect them, but quickly fade when gathered by the hand of man.

Roses bloom freshly in the sheltered inclosure ; but wither in the public way, and are trodden under foot.

2. So does the pious and religious man lose the sweetness of devotion, when lightness or inconstancy often leads him into the tumult of the world ; but he

that flies from its distraction, sheds abroad from his retreat the sweet odour of sanctity.

Exposed to the wind the taper is extinguished, enclosed in a lanthorn it continues to burn ; so is it with devotion ; it is preserved most securely in the secret chamber, but is soon dissipated if exposed to the agitation of worldly business.

Love, then, solitude and silence, if thou wouldst enjoy devotion and peace of heart ; for he that would move among men unhurt, must, indeed, be well covered in armour of a celestial kind, unshaken faith, well grounded hope, and ardent charity.

Like the blessed Virgin Mary, who dwelt alone in her chamber, entertaining her soul with the holy angel, whom God had sent to her from Heaven ; may the love of devotion keep thee in solitude and in thy closet, that to thee also may come the holy angel, the messenger of heaven, and faithful guardian of thy soul, and that thou mayest keep off the evil one, and all his delusions.

A devout lover of silence hath said, "It is seldom, after much conversation with men, that my conscience has not something to reproach me with ;" and another, "Our words should be very edifying, to be preferred before silence ;" and a third, "That a word is indeed good when spoken in season ;" lastly, a fourth adds, "He that keepeth his mouth closed, shall not be guilty of detraction or lying."

3. With what esteem and pleasure does not one listen to the discourse of a man who permits nothing bad, nothing vain, nothing deceitful, nothing false, to pass his lips.

Many speak much, and of many things ; but never without peril, for the tongue is naturally prone to evil. He that cleaves to solitude, watches over his tongue, and prays frequently, shall find much peace.

Esteem the good man who practises virtue in silence ; rebuke the babbler who gives himself up to idle words ; but avoid the crafty dissembler.

Fly from the tumult of the world ; love a silent and a retired life ; imitate the humble and devout ; bear patiently with those that molest thee, for the sake of Christ crucified.

4. A novice once asked an aged brother which rule or statute in the Ordinal was the most sure means of attaining true peace and devotion, the old man gave him this remarkable answer : “ Keep the silence enjoined by thy fathers, avoid the tumult of men, and shun idleness.”

There are three things indispensable in a religious life, and are moreover most pleasing to God and his angels.

1st. Manual labour, to overcome sloth. 2d. The study and reading of holy books, to prevent disrelish and weariness of heart. 3d. The continual use of prayer, to counteract the stratagems of the devil.

The ancient fathers of a spiritual life taught, and the modern ones repeat after them, that silence and prayer draw down benedictions from God, give to the soul profound light, and dispose it to meditate with much fruit on the highest mysteries.

But he that lives in dissipation and distraction of mind, and who fosters idleness by frivolous discourse, makes himself unworthy of the heavenly gifts, and becomes a trouble to his brethren.

The vain man cannot long keep silence, for he wishes to pass for wise, and to be praised above others.

He that talks presumptuously is deservedly blamed by many ; but he that keeps a modest silence obtains the esteem of all.

He that despises himself, and who thinks others better than himself, shows great humility of heart ; but great is the pride of him who is self-sufficient, who persists in his own opinion contrary to the will of God, and in opposition to all his brethren.

This vice is the most dangerous leprosy of all ; what God abhors and often strikes with sudden death.

He that is simple and innocent, and submits humbly to authority, shall be always in joy, and nothing shall shake his security.

Be sparing in words ; avoid frivolous conversation ; speak nothing but what is profitable ; do all things with modesty ; so shall thy praise be great among thy brethren.

“ Be moderate in all things—moderation is the fairest of virtues”—Cato—and so Christ himself teaches us : “ Have salt in you, and peace among you.”—Mark ix. 49.

And the Apostle St. Paul : “ Let your speech be always in grace, seasoned with salt.”—Coloss. iv. 6.

And holy Job, when he says, “ Can an unsavoury thing be eaten that is not seasoned with salt.”—Job vi. 6.

5. The chaste and modest man sets a continual watch over his mouth and heart, and all his affections, that naturally incline to evil, lest he fall into sin, and offend God, or his neighbour ; but there is no compunction in the heart of him who takes plea-

sure in listening to idle tales, and repeating them to others.

He that guards not his heart and sets not a watch at the gate of his lips, shall lose in a very little while the grace of compunction ; and a religious man, fond of talking, soon passes the bounds of moderate conversation.

If thou hadst the crucified Jesus in thy heart, thy mouth would not lend itself so easily to vain and idle conversation ; but since thou hast not Jesus steadfast in thy heart, thou seekest abroad for consolations, weak and illusory, and but ill-adapted to calm the afflictions of that heart ; for Jesus alone can afford it true consolation, and heal the wounds which sin has made.

In a little moment, with one word, he can assuage all thy infirmities ; for the grace of God is more powerful for good, than the influence of the evil one is suggestive of evil.

Why dost thou lend thy ears to the vain rumours of the world which so often trouble and distract the heart ? Why dost thou refuse to listen to the sweet instructions of Christ, who day and night offers thee consolation and strength against all tribulations.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE REFUGE OF THE POOR, IN GOD THEIR HELPER.

“ To Thee is the poor man left, Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan.”—PSALM ix. 36.

1. Blessed is the poor who has God for his help

and support in tribulation : and for his comforter in suffering ; who puts all his hope and trust in God, and in his last hour awaits from Him the crown of glory in the kingdom of eternal bliss.

Voluntary poverty, assumed for the love of Christ, is a precious virtue in the sight of God :—the everlasting recompense is in heaven, under the ward of the angels ; thieves cannot steal it away ; nor can the murderer make it his prey.

By renouncing all the pleasures and gratifications of the world, the servant of Christ dwells beyond the circle of the dangers and cares which ever surround the rich on earth.

The faithful soul, who for the love of Jesus Christ, and for his kingdom's sake, despoils himself of everything in this world, enjoys true liberty, and possesses all things in Jesus ; who for the love of us became poor, and submitted to suffering : who was hung naked on the cross, and had not where to lay his head, nor power to move his hands or feet.

Who amongst us can compare our nakedness or poverty with His?—assuredly no one ; wherefore, “ His name alone is exalted, the praise of Him is above heaven and earth.” (Psalm cxlviii. 13.)

Oh ! salutary poverty, thou now-a-days wouldst meet nothing but contempt among men, unless God had been the first to submit voluntarily to thy privations.

Oh happy poverty,—debaring us from the pride of the eyes, and the occasion of many sins !

2. He is truly poor in spirit, who neither from word nor deed draws forth vanity, and who lest he fall thereby, covets not the honours of the world.

O what an excellent virtue is voluntary poverty,



retaining nothing to call its own! It opens to the soul the gates of heaven, it adds new jewels to the crown of glory, that is laid up in heaven; it makes us worthy to receive with the martyr, the palm of patience, after the hardships and sufferings of life, spent in the service of Christ.

For this is truly and faithfully to labour in the service of God, when for His love, we bear with want and all the inconveniences which follow poverty.

Blessed is he who learns how to profit by his wants and infirmities, and who in all the privations he endures, is still submissive to the will of God.

Let not poverty afflict thy heart when thou sufferest want.—If men mock thee, or friends desert thee, give not way to wrath—but turn thy heart to Jesus, who became poor and weak for thy sake. Take comfort in God—in God alone—if thou wouldst have thy soul rejoice for ever;—for all consolations out of Him, how great soever they seem, are vain, transient, and insufficient.

3. Choose, then, Jesus Christ for thy only friend and brother: renounce all to follow him.

Avoid above all the fellowship of those who would turn thee from His holy service; and who, by leading thee again into the world, may lead thee to the gates of hell. “For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction,” saith Jesus Christ, “and many there are who go in thereat.” (Matt. vii. 13.)

From Him only canst thou find the consolation required; from Him who is able to give the kingdom of heaven to those who for His sake, renounce the kingdom of this world, and all its vanities; “for

the world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof," (1 John ii. 17,) like smoke driven by the wind, and like the flowers of the field that wither away.

Do thou then, my brother, who hast submitted to voluntary poverty, go on courageously in thy holy enterprise; be constant day and night in the service of God, in the peaceful abode thy piety has made choice of. Remember that thou hast spontaneously forsaken thy parents and thy friends, to unite thyself wholly to God; that thou mayest one day find them again, in the kingdom of Christ, and rejoice with them in the company of all the saints.

Thy light afflictions and transitory sorrow here on earth, shall be recompensed in heaven by the joy of eternal rest.

Reflect often on the sacred wounds of Christ; think of the grievous sores of the poor Lazarus; and it shall profit much during the last agony, when at the point of death thou art about to pass from time to eternity.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### ON THE POOR AND SICK LAZARUS.

"I am poor and sorrowful, let thy salvation, O God, set me up."—Ps. lxxviii. 30.

1. This is the prayer of one who is poor and in suffering, whose sighs continually ascend to heaven.

Ye suffering poor, bear patiently, yet a little while, your sorrows and privations, whether of food or raiment; you shall not have long to wait the hour of your deliverance.



Give thanks to God, for it is better to be afflicted now on earth, in company with the poor and the sick, than to be tormented hereafter in hell with the powerful and the wealthy.

Recal to mind thy past transgressions, whether against God or thy neighbour, and bear the chastisement which the Lord sends to afflict thee, in remission of such sins as thou hast not fully repented of, or for which thou hast not made ample satisfaction.

Comfort thy soul by the memory of the cruel sorrows and sacred wounds of Jesus Christ. Thy divine Saviour has endured more bitter stripes for thee, than thou canst suffer for the love of Him.

Comfort thy soul in Him, by recalling to thy memory how Lazarus, poor and covered with sores in this life, was, after death, joyously received in Abraham's bosom: and fear the end of that rich man, who fared sumptuously, but who, after his feasting, was buried in hell, whence there was no departure.

Make now thy choice—thou must either endure for a short while the pains and privations of Lazarus, in his poverty and sickness, for the sake of joy eternal in Christ, or partake of the dainties of the rich man in full health, which may end so shortly in instant burial in hell, to burn in fire for ever with the devil and his angels. Few words are needed by him that is wise.

2. Blessed is he that understands and purifies his heart from all depraved affections, while yet in his power: lest he be condemned to endure the horrible punishments which await the impenitent sinner.

For he on whom holy instructions make no im-

pression, or awaken no sentiment of penance, shall be given over one day to cruel torments, which he shall be constrained to endure fruitlessly, and without hope for all eternity.

Lazarus, poor and afflicted in this life, was, after death, delivered from these punishments, and was borne by holy angels in joy and triumph to Abraham's bosom.

Remark also even in the lifetime of poor Lazarus, the multiplied consolations which the merciful goodness of the Lord offers him in his misery.

We have never heard that he was visited by rich friends to comfort him in his misery;—that he had servants to wait his orders;—that he was surrounded by anxious brethren :—but Jesus tells us, that the dogs came and licked his sores! (Luke xvi. 22.) these were all that came to him in his misery! no consolation from man, dogs only administering to him! Can any misery be worse than this? Yet no murmuring or impatient word fell from his lips, but rather thanksgivings and praise:—he that was refused comfort from the instrumentality of man, received it meekly from the sensibility of beasts.

Thou then, weak and suffering brother, murmur not, if, even for a season, thou mayest be deprived of human consolation, or if the goad of thy infirmities press yet more heavily. Remember that the divine mercy so disposes it, in order that—"Cut and burned in this world, thou mayest not be lost in the next."

Lazarus, perhaps, was not guilty in the sight of God but of very slight faults; while thou hast often and very grievously offended Him.

Bear then thy infirmities with patience; and if sometimes the consolations of man be withheld, rejoice, nevertheless, that, with Lazarus, thou mayest thereby be worthy to enter the gates of the heavenly kingdom.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### ON THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

“The declaration of thy words giveth light, and bestoweth understanding on little ones.”—Ps. cxviii. 130.

1. All that is written in the Old and New Testaments, has been written for our instruction, and with the design of bringing us to serve God faithfully, to inspire in us a horror of what is evil, and a love, boundless, pure, and entire, both in this world, and in that which is to come, for Him who is our sovereign good.

Ask humbly for a knowledge of what thou art ignorant of, and ask respectfully from those who are better instructed than thyself, for the right understanding of what thou dost not comprehend. “For the declaration of the words of God giveth light to the hearts of the little ones.”

If thou art not capable of rising to the knowledge of the most sublime truths, learn with “the little ones,” to know such as are small; it is of such that our Lord Jesus hath said, “suffer the little children to come to me, for the kingdom of heaven is for such.” (Matt. xix. 14.)

Beware therefore of rashly sounding what is concealed from thy understanding ; leave to the Holy Spirit the care of discovering such to thee. Follow his aspirations with a lively faith ; for the Holy Spirit is the source of all truth, and He can never bear testimony to error.

2. If on some points, many persons have doubts, attribute them to the blindness of their spirit, or to their ignorance, and not to the silence or obscurity of the Holy Scriptures, which unfold all the needful documents of eternal salvation.

Read then with pleasure the canonical Scriptures ; and to this reading be careful to join the explication of them which the doctors of the Church have given, and thus study to understand them well.

But, nevertheless, let not thy diligence in this study withdraw thee from prayer, or the celebration, or the hearing of the holy mass : for often during holy mass, and in the fervour of prayer, God communicates to devout souls many hidden things which He conceals from those who search curiously, and full of self-sufficiency.

Simple words bring instruction to the little ones and the ignorant ; but subtle explanations, which they do not understand, are vain and profitless.

Those that in the refectory, or in the choir, listen attentively to the reading, and seek with prudence to penetrate the mystical sense of the facts recited to them, extract from all they hear or read, the honey of the word of God.

Whence, though during life, man may ever add something to his knowledge, and discover every day truths of a higher order ; yet he shall not attain to

the clear and perfect intelligence of the angels ; nor shall he enjoy the beatific vision, till, by the help of Christ, he shall have entered into the glory of eternal bliss.

3. Strong and solid food is hurtful to little ones : the weak and babes must be fed with light and delicate nourishment.

Simple music and moderate songs sometimes touch the ear more pleasantly than the swell of voices, which break on the hearing like peals of thunder, and fatigue rather than charm.

Frequent flashes of lightning dazzle the eye ; while a moderate light keeps the vision in activity.

The imprudent traveller, who would rashly swim across a deep river, may be drowned ; but he that passes by the bridge, reaches the other side without danger.

The lamb passes freely in a narrow path, where the heavy bullock falls, and is caught but to be led to the slaughter.

So the soul whose faith is simple, and whose submission is humble, findeth grace ; where the soul full of confidence in itself, loses all it possesses.

High knowledge but too easily puffeth up the proud ; and turns, at last, to the confusion of those who glory therein.

4. I have seen simple souls bathed in tears in the fervour of prayer, while those who sang with a loud and melodious voice, felt nothing but dryness of heart. And why this difference ?—because the simple and humble soul, in all it says or does, seeks only the glory of God. The voice of the simple in heart, is with God in heaven ; the voice

of the wandering and dissipated singer, is with men in the streets and public places.

He that attends seriously to the spiritual sense of the Psalms, who reads them slowly, or sings them with attention, tastes, in abundance, the sweetness of devotion. For the Lord is indeed sweet to such as are right in heart, and to those who seek His glory, and not the gratification of their own vanity.

Blessed is the voice of him that sings and declares the praises of God in such a manner, as to fill the hearts of those who hear him with compunction.

5. Before crowing, the cock plumes his wings, as if to prepare himself; so should the good Christian or the pious preacher correct his own faults before he undertakes to correct those of others. He that would announce with prudence and success, the word of God, must begin by correcting in himself those vices he condemns in others.

It is thus that St. Paul, while instructing others, humbly calls himself the chief of sinners: "Jesus Christ hath come into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief," (1 Tim. i. 15,) and "who am not worthy to be called an apostle." And why, O most glorious saint? "Because I persecuted the church of God." How then art thou now become a vessel of election, filled with holiness, and truly worthy of all glory? I owe it not either to myself or to men, but by the vocation and revelation of Jesus Christ, from whom I have learned to be meek and humble of heart, and to be obedient to His gospel. I know of no good in myself; all that I



do or teach, I attribute to Him, who by His grace, hath called me to the faith which I preach, and to which I shall be faithful unto death. For only "by the grace of God I am what I am." (1 Cor. xv. 9.) And His grace in me has not been in vain; but remains in me, and shall remain till I come to Him who hath redeemed me and saved me by His precious blood.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE GREAT MERIT OF PATIENCE FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST.

"In your patience you shall possess your souls."

LUKE xxi. 19.

1. When thou art addressed harshly, or reprov'd unjustly, give not way to the first emotion of anger nor reply sharply; but keep silence, or speak humbly, or suffer with patience like Jesus; for when they brought false witness against him, he was silent, and when scourged, he murmured not.

Or if it be necessary or useful to justify thy actions, do it gently and with prudence, and in such a manner as Christ did: when rudely struck by the servant of the high priest, he answered meekly and reasonably; so shalt thou edify others and be freed from confusion.

In every circumstance or contradiction of wicked tongues, be patient, and observe a pious silence towards those who oppose thee.

2. In the spiritual interest of thy soul, never forget

how precious a virtue is patience, which adorns the soul with all virtues, and leads to the martyr's glorious palm.

This Christ hath taught in his words—this he hath exemplified in his passion; for when he was accused before the princes of the priesthood, and the ancients of the people, he answered nothing; putting in practice what he before taught, “Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. (Matt. xi. 29.)

Thou canst not find elsewhere sure peace and true rest, but in God alone, in the practice of sincere humility, and of a mild indulgent patience which overcomes all adversaries.

Put then all thy hope in God, and not in any creature, great or small, for without God all is but vanity; and with God all is good.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### ON THE GOOD CONVERSATION OF THE HUMBLE CHRISTIAN.

“Flee away, O my beloved.”—CANT. viii. 14.

1. Why should I flee away? Because of the many dangers which surround thee in the world, and which fall on those who converse therein.

He that would give himself up to the service of God, must love solitude, prayer, study, and labour; and so by useful employments, preserve his soul from the perils of vice, spend his time with fruit, and edify his neighbour.



But he that loves the world, and willingly converses therein, seldom keeps his heart unspotted, and always returns to his peaceful retreat, with less devotion than when he went out.

Pious and modest conversation is pleasing to all ; but harsh and inconsiderate words wound the ears of our friends.

He that loves virtue speaks the truth, but he that makes use of lying speech, deceives his neighbour, and renders himself odious.

He that is truly humble, seeks not praise for the good he has done ; but refers to God all the good that there is in his actions, and attributes to himself only what is evil.

The liar drives Christ from his heart ; and he that would fathom the mysteries of religion, confounds himself, and justly falls into error ; but he that speaks frankly and straightforward, is honoured and loved by all.

2. We are all brethren, created by the same God ; we are all sinners, born of guilty parents ; but, by the grace of Christ, we are called to the faith ; we are regenerated by the same baptism ; and we are all but one body in Christ. Let no one, then, despise or ridicule, or offend his neighbour in anything ; we ought rather, in conformity to the will of God, to help and instruct him, as far as we are able ; doing to him as we would be done by, were we in want.

He that by words of edification, confirms the weak in the faith, feeds the sick with the bread of heaven.

He that consoles the afflicted, gives a cup of life to the thirsty.

He that calms the wrath of his brother by meek words, withholds a dog from biting, by anointing his tongue with honey.

He that checks a wandering tongue, brings much peace to his brethren. •

He that prefers himself before others, shows but little judgment, and deserves confusion.

He that humbles himself in all things, deserves to receive more abundant grace and honour.

By prayer the pious and humble man breaks the snares of the evil one, and escapes ; while the proud, led on by vain glory, falls into his toils, and perishes.

From which may the pious Jesus ever preserve us, and conduct us to the joys of heaven! Amen.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ON PRUDENT CONVERSATION, AND BROTHERLY COMPASSION.

“Physician, heal thyself.”—LUKE iv. 23.

1. Keep in mind these words, before thou admonish or rebuke thy neighbour: lest haply, in reproving him indiscreetly or unjustly, thou commit a greater fault than his.

The just and prudent man watches his opportunity, and seeks to learn the character and habits of the person to whom he wishes to give advice, lest he drive away or hurt him whom he would correct.

The mouth of the wise and discreet man is wor-

thy of honour, and is like a solid vessel enriched with gold, filled with balm and odoriferous perfumes.

The sanctity of thy words, and the regularity of thy morals, edify those who are attached to the things of this world—excite the indifferent—rebuke the negligent—bring the wandering heart to compunction—instruct the ignorant, and inflame the fervour of the devout. For the lively example of good men persuades more effectively to contempt of the world, and amendment of life, than the verbose eloquence of worldly learning.

2. It must not be thought, that a desire to instruct and correct others, is a proof of ability or virtue; but to govern oneself well, to receive reproof with pious humility, and to labour fervently in the reform of one's own heart—this is great wisdom both before God and men.

Learn to put a favourable interpretation on what is doubtful—never to pass judgment on what is unknown—to avoid all open evil—to beware of giving scandal—to bear patiently with the defects or faults of thy brethren—and to commit to the mercy of God what thou canst not correct.

Reflect that God has borne, and still bears with thee every day in a great many weaknesses; and notwithstanding thou dost not amend them, though thou often declarest thy intention, and that thou hast the will to do so. But his mercy still bears with and awaits thee, to lead thee to penance, and to teach thee thy own infirmities, so that thou mayest humbly sue for pardon, and learn not to despise or rashly condemn thy neighbour.

Be then patient and merciful to thy brother in few things, as God is to thee in many things.

The devout and humble man speaks little, lest his much speaking should be hurtful to internal recollection.

The proud man speaks harshly, and the passionate man disturbs the soul of those he corrects; as he, himself, is disturbed when corrected. But the meek bears patiently with those he would correct—makes use of entreaty rather than reproach—is compassionate for their sins—and shows himself, indeed, the friend of their souls.

He that seeks to be first, exposes himself to many perils, and becomes despicable.

The lover of vain glory keeps not long silence, lest he pass for ignorant: he is ashamed of mean and servile employments; he cannot bear to put himself in the last place, or to sit on the lowest seat. And yet it is the highest honour to practise humility in all things—to place oneself beneath other men, and voluntarily to fulfil the office of servant to others, for the sake of Christ, who has said, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." (Luke xxii. 27.)

Learn, then, young man, to be silent, if thou wouldst not be covered with confusion, when speaking in the presence of thy elders.

For it is more profitable to be silent than to speak foolishly.

3. It is a great art to know how to receive correction in silence, and much wisdom to speak modestly and in season; and to say nothing before enlightened men but what is just and fit.

The fool knows not how to observe either time, or purpose, or order; moreover he often suffers much disquietude from the humiliations his own unadvised discourse has justly drawn upon him.

The presumptuous young man, who speaks inconsiderately, is like the fool who stands on a precipice. If he receive advice with docility, correction in silence, and commands with submission, there will be great hope that he may make much progress in virtue, and one day flourish like the lily of the valleys.

Great is the pride of him who persists in his own designs, contrary to the will of God, and who refuses submission to the wise counsels of the aged.

Since it is difficult for man in all his words and actions to keep always within the bounds of moderation, and to watch over his soul; hence it is that religious persons love solitude, and seek retreat and silence, to give themselves up to prayer apart from the tumult of the world.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE UNCERTAIN HOUR OF DEATH, AND THE  
SPEEDY END OF THIS LIFE.

“Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.”—MATT. xxv. 13.

1. Blessed is the soul that thinks often of the last hour, when all must be ended in this life; joys and sorrows, honours and reproaches.

Happy the soul that is as a poor pilgrim travelling towards God—which despises all the pomp of this world, howsoever great or alluring. For in that last

hour all shall perish—castles, cities, villages, vessels of gold and silver, all delicate viands, and variegated cups of perfumed wine.

Then shall be mute, lyre, trumpet, pipe, and harp.

Then shall be no more sport nor mirth, no more dance nor loud applause, no more songs nor merry laughter, no more the cry of revelry in street or bower, for the hearts of all living shall wither away, and the whole earth shall tremble in the presence of God.

Oh how wise is he who meditates daily on these things, and who prepares, by tears, for the enjoyment of blessings to come, and joy eternal.

2. Blessed is he who separates himself voluntarily from the many snares and perils of this world, and from all that may flatter his sensual appetite.

Blessed is the pilgrim who, in his exile, weeps and mourns, and desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, in the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed is the man who hates this world, and all therein that would allure him to sin, and who flies like Elias, to some monastery in the desert, from the face of numberless dangers, which often drag down the unguarded soul to hell.

Blessed is he that watches day and night against temptation, and who cries out with Elias, "It is enough for me, Lord, take away my soul;" (3 Reg. xix. 4.) for it is better for me to die in thy grace, and when my heart is full of trust in thee, than to live in this world, surrounded by so many dangers, a witness to evil; for so long as the soul is united to the body, and the body is nourished with the produce of earth, man cannot be exempt from sin, nor free



from temptation, nor assured that he may not hereafter fall.

He then is greatly deceived, and errs like a man foolish of heart, who only desires to live long here below, and to purpose to do many things, when he knows not where he shall be on the morrow.

3. Remember, ye rich and powerful, surrounded with so many enjoyments and delights, what will become of you, when dead and buried in the earth? what will all those riches which you possess, avail you?

Behold! to-day a king, in the full enjoyment of life, and empire, and to-morrow he is found no more, nor shall his voice again be heard.

To-day, he is seated on a lofty throne, and arrayed in robes of gold, and to-morrow he is laid in the tomb and shall be seen no more.

To-day he is honoured by many, to-morrow he is regarded by none.

To-day he is magnified by all, to-morrow is divested of all his riches and honours, and villas, and castles.

To-day he is comely above other men, and numbered with kings; to-morrow he is food for worms, and a stench in the nostrils.

As he came naked into the world, so, like a poor exile, shall he be borne to the grave.

For short is the end of all the pleasures, pomps, and vanities of the world, and death and grief, and mourning and fear, is the lot of all.

His holiness the Pope dies; the Cardinals die; the most powerful sovereigns die; and others succeed, who in their turn soon follow them to the tomb.



No one can be assured of life for a single day, nor obtain from the pope, nor from all earthly monarchs the privilege of not dying; nor procure a benefice or an office, from which he can never be ejected.

It often happens that after having obtained favours and places, death comes unexpectedly, and takes all away; so that the suppliant returns from court, as poor and naked as when he first went thither.

4. We read in history of many among the patriarchs and fathers, who lived very long. "Such and such a one lived;" and so of others; but at last it was said of all,—“and he died:” for “we all die, and like waters that return no more, we sink into the earth,” (2 Reg. xiv. 14.) whence we sprung.

What is the most protracted period of life but a short moment,—a passing wind,—a morning brightness which fades away,—a traveller who retraces not his steps?

Like a flash of lightning which disappears in the twinkling of an eye, so shall ages disappear; and with them the kingdoms of the earth.

Reckon the hours, the days, the months, and the years of thy life; and tell me whither are they all gone?—they have passed away like a shadow; they have perished like a spider's web,—destroyed by the first wind.

There is nothing lasting, nothing abiding on this earth; of which the body of Adam, and of his sons were all fashioned.

5. Greatness, beauty, pleasures,—all in the world, is full of vanity and frailty.

Then let not these attractions allure, nor their despite or deprivation overwhelm thee.

The fairest colours fade in death, and the richest ornaments, decked with gold, silver, and precious gems, in the dark tomb are dim and valueless.

Therefore in all thy works, whatever they may be, wherever thou goest, whithersoever thou proceedest, be mindful of the end of life, and of that last hour, which shall come when thou thinkest not.

Blessed is he, who, with the apostle St. Paul, "desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; a thing by far the better" (Phil. i. 23.) for us, than to remain a long time in the flesh, on the sea of this world, beaten about by storms, a stranger to God, and ever in fear.

If thou wilt bear Jesus continually in thy heart; if thou wilt love him sincerely; if every day thou wilt address thy prayers to him; then mayest thou confidently hope to one day enter into his kingdom; for he hath said, "where I am, there also shall my minister be."—(John xii. 26.)

Blessed is the servant, who, at his last hour, shall deserve to hear those sweet words of Jesus Christ, "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—(Matt. xxv. 21.)

## CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THE ETERNAL PRAISE OF GOD, AND THE DESIRE  
OF ETERNAL GLORY.

“Praise the Lord, O my Soul,” from whom cometh all good,  
both now and for ever more.—Ps. xlv. 2.

1. Thus oughtest thou to refer all to Him, as to the first beginning and the last end of all good. Thou oughtest to praise Him with sentiments of inmost gratitude, in order that the gift of his heavenly grace may flow upon thee anew in larger streams, and with continued increase; until thou wilt have arrived at the fountain of life eternal, to the country of eternal charity, and to the beatific vision of His divine presence and glory.

For thee there is nothing better or more salutary, more sweet or agreeable, more worthy, more exalted, more happy, more perfect, more blessed, than to love God most ardently, and to praise Him without measure. This I would tell thee a hundred times;—this I would repeat a thousand times. There is no study so elegant, no employment so noble, as that of loving and praising God, thy Creator and Redeemer, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.

Do this as long as thou hast life, and being, and intellect; let this be the only object of all thy discourse, and of all thy actions, night and day, at morning, at mid-day, at evening, at every hour, at every instant.

2. Unite thyself to him as strictly as thy strength

and knowledge permit, wholly and entirely:—in order that to thee, God may be all things, and that, before all and above all, He may be loved, blessed, praised and exalted by thee, for all ages, and that thou mayest enjoy together with him a happiness without end.

Exult, then, O faithful soul, in the Lord thy God, as the blessed Virgin Mary rejoiced in Jesus Christ her Saviour.

Exult and praise thy God, who has made and redeemed thee, for to God thou art indebted for all those many and inestimable benefits which thou dost daily receive from his merciful bounty; for even wert thou a holy angel, thy gratitude as such would still be inadequate to his goodness and infinite grandeur.

Praise him nevertheless, thank him, as a mortal man dependent on his mercy, and ever seeking and imploring it with tearful perseverance.

Cease not to pray to him and to praise him, and although thou shouldst often unhappily fall into sin, and thereby offend him, despair not, but rather humble thyself, and pray with more fervour.

Love, and thou shalt be loved: love purifies the soul from all past faults; cleanses and cures all its wounds—enlightens the spirit—inflames the heart—drives away sadness, and begets inward joy; such as the world knoweth not, and flesh and blood can never feel.

Praise God, and thou shalt be praised; bless him, and thou shalt be blessed; sanctify his name, and thou shalt be made holy; magnify him and thou shalt be made great; glorify him, and thou shalt be glorified by him in soul as well as in body.

3. *The Soul*.—But when shall these things be? When wilt thou open my mouth, to sing thy praises for ever? when will my heart and my soul rejoice together with thy saints in glory?

*The Lord*.—Wait yet a little while, and when the trumpet shall sound, thou shalt see great wonders; then shall I give to my saints in recompense of their pains, and labours, rest and life eternal,—what wishest thou more?

*The Soul*.—Absolutely nothing, O Lord; thou alone art sufficient for me, my God; thou who givest life eternal to those who love and praise thee: thou who renderest goods, vast, inestimable, and eternal, for what is valueless and perishable.

*The Lord*.—Give then thyself to God, and all that thou hast; give him all thy actions, all thy knowledge, all thy faculties, and thou shalt be richer and dearer to him than thou hast ever yet been.

Say with St. Paul, that “we are as having nothing, and possessing all things” in God; (2 Cor. vi 10.) poor, afflicted, despised in the eyes of men, but rich and “always rejoicing” (1 Thes. v. 16.) in the Lord, and sure of receiving our reward in heaven. (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

4. *The Soul*.—O Lord God, my salvation, and my God! when shall my soul enjoy in thy kingdom the gracious light of thy countenance? Oh! when wilt thou enlighten all the darkness of my spirit in the splendour of eternal light.

When wilt thou remove from my heart every obstacle which prevents me from uniting myself intimately to thee. O true peace, supreme blessedness, perfect felicity.

O Lord, when shall I be able to follow thee, free from all hindrance and restraint ; and go wherever thou shalt lead the way.

When shall I be able with mine eyes to see thee clearly, without a glass, without a riddle, without a parable, without a figure, without uncertainty, without the doubts, and discussions, and questions of the learned ?

When shall it be given me to fully understand all these things which the Holy Scriptures present to my belief,—all these things which I have read in various authors ;—all these things which in various places I have heard from learned instructors concerning my God, concerning the angels, their different choirs, concerning the glory and beatitude of the heavenly country, concerning the peace and joy ineffable of the celestial inhabitants !

When shall I be there ? when shall I be able to appear in thy blessed presence ; to contemplate thy radiant countenance, and the glory of thy heavenly kingdom, with the cherubim and seraphim, and all the saints ?

But the hour is not yet come ; the gates of heaven are yet closed to me ; wherefore, O my God, my heart is afflicted ; and my mouth uttereth groanings, as long as I tarry here, and until I come to thee, my God.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

OF THE PRAISES SUNG BY THE HOLY ANGELS IN  
HEAVEN.

“I will sing to thee in the sight of the angels.”—  
Psalm cxxxvii 1.

1. O King most High! O Lord supreme! O God worthy of all praise! Creator of all things, of angels and of men! how long shall I tarry sojourning on earth, far removed from thee and all thy holy angels in heaven? Poor and wretched creature as I am, how long shall I eat with men the bread of toil and of sorrow? How long shall I be deprived of the bread of angels,—that food so exquisite, containing “all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste.”—(Wisdom xvi. 20.)

2. O Lord, when shall I hear the sound of thy praises sung by thy holy angels in heaven; as the blessed apostle John when in exile, heard the voices of many angels singing together,—“Holy, Holy, Holy?” (Apoc. iv. 8.)

Oh that I were one of that holy company, and had a voice like unto theirs! Oh how willingly would I praise thee in company with them: beyond the londest canticles in heaven would I sing thy praise and magnify thy holy name to all eternity!

Oh ye Cherubim and Seraphim, how sweetly, how beautifully, how fervently, how excellently ye sing those joyous hymns in presence of your God, without lassitude, without fatigue, without cessation in eternal felicity!



3. To me, therefore, all human accent appears harsh; every song, unharmonious; every psalm, spiritless and dry; every music disagreeable; every instrument out of tune; every joy appears extreme sadness; every laughter, mourning; every kind of meat and drink, insipid and tasteless; all flesh, so much grass; all wine, gall and vinegar; all honey, poison; every thing pleasant, disagreeable; all beauty, an object of disgust; every ornament, so much deformity; all honour and glory, smoke and vanity; every thing precious and valuable, contemptible and disgusting; in one word, all things appear as nothing in comparison with life eternal, glory without end, and never ceasing joy in the presence of God and his angels; who day and night for ever sing in highest note, the praises of the holy and the glorious Trinity.

4. Since then I am unable to soar aloft to these sublime and heavenly canticles, or fully to comprehend them, I bewail my sad fate, and despise myself before God and men—bending my knees and humbly asking pardon:—for in truth all my works are nothing, O Lord, without thy grace and thy mercy, which in so great bounty, thou dost display in all thy creatures without limit of number or measure. “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!” (Rom. xi. 33.) how profound and how just are thy judgments from age to age, upon the good and the bad—the grateful and the ungrateful—upon the pious and the impious: so that no one can fathom thy words; no one can with justice, complain of events that happen unexpectedly in the course of human affairs. Wherefore be thou ever blessed, O my God!

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## A PRAYER OF THE DEVOUT LOVER OF GOD.

"Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight."—  
PSALM cxi. 2.

1. I desire, O Lord my God, in every place and at all time, to join Thy saints, and all Thy creatures, in devoutly praising and blessing Thee ;—in publishing thine infinite perfections :—in loving Thee perfectly ;—in glorifying Thee without ceasing, and in exalting the greatness and glory of Thy holy name for ever ; for Thou, O Lord, Thou art my God, and I am Thy poor servant.

For thou art my light and my hope, O my God !  
Thou art my strength and my patience, my praise and my glory, O my God !

Thou art my wisdom, my prudence, my beauty, and all my sweetness, O my God !

Thou art my music and harp, my organ and timbrel, O my God !

Thou art the psalm that brings gladness to my heart, my hymn, my canticle, and my song of joy, O my God !

Thou art my casque and breastplate, my bow and my sword, O my God !

2. Thou art my treasure, my gold and silver ; and the talent with which I am to pay all my debts, O my God !

Thou art my dwelling-place, my fortress, and my palace, O my God !

Thou art my shield and banner, my tower of strength, and the defence of my life, O my God !

Thou art my garden and orchard, my bower of green, and cool retreat, O my God !

Thou art my refectory and table, my meat and my drink, O my God ! for all food not prepared and seasoned by thee, seems to me stale and flat, O my God !

Thou art my aromatical plant, and balsam of sweetness, my spikenard and choice myrrh, and most precious ointment, O my God !

Thou art my rose and lily, my wreath and garland, O my God !

Thou art my dormitory, and my bed, my napkin and my covering art thou, O my God !

3. Thou art my light and my lamp—my lustre and star that enlightens me, O my God.

Thou art my book written within and without ; my Bible, in which all the Holy Scripture is contained, and the teacher who gives to me understanding, O my God.

Thou art my kind instructor, and skilful physician, kindly administering the remedies requisite for my spiritual welfare, O my God !

For in Thee I find all things, and all that I have is through Thy mercy and goodness ; and I feel that all that I seek, or all that I desire out of Thee, is of little or no profit to my soul.

Open then my heart to thy holy law ; “restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ;” (Psalm i. 14,) enlarge my heart that I may run in thy ways, confirm me by thy words, for thou alone canst help me, and lead me to eternal life.

O Lord, my God, hear the vows I address to Thee, in joy, in tribulation, in health, or sickness—in all things—I commend me into Thy hands, and desire to bless Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### ON UNION OF THE HEART WITH GOD.

“Turn, O my soul, into thy rest, for the Lord hath been bountiful to thee.”—PSALM c<sup>xiv</sup> 7.

1. For verily He is thy rest, and thy peace, thy life, thy salvation, and thy happiness: all, therefore, that thou dost, all that thou seest, all that thou hearest of good, refer to the glory of God, that so thou mayest have peace and a good conscience.

Put not thy trust,—rejoice not,—in thyself or others, but cling to God alone, purely, steadily, entirely: dwell with Him who giveth and worketh all in all, by the might of His goodness, and the greatness of His mercy.

Oh, who will give me grace to refer all to the praise and honour of God?—with all my strength to do all the good that I am bound, or am able to do;—to be so insensible to the vanities of earth, that none of them, whether great or small, shall be able to draw me from Him;—to turn me away from His service;—to overcast my soul with trouble, or in anywise to hinder me?

But perhaps it is not possible for me to obtain such a state in this life? Oh, say not so, for all is

possible to God, and He can, instantly, by the sweet cords of His love, unite the devout soul to Himself; for this pure, and perfect love of God, can so act in a moment, whensoever it pleases Him, that forgetful of all creatures, the soul may be wholly united to Him alone, and vehemently inflamed, yea melted, by the fire of His love.

2. Oh, my God and my love, when, in this place of exile, shall I be wholly united to Thee? when shall I love Thee with all the strength of my soul—that strength which Thou alone hast given and graciously infused.

May all created beings keep silence<sup>e</sup> before Thee, O my God! Speak Thou only to my soul, O God, blessed eternally! assist it, help it, enlighten it, Thou that art all in all, and whose brightness is above the stars of the firmament!

Happy is the soul, which, being afflicted in this world, is comforted of God;—which being unknown to men,—is known to the holy angels;—neglected by the wicked, but sought after by the good;—despised by the proud, but loved by the humble;—separated from the children of the world, but united to the servants of God;—scorned by the great, but honoured by the little ones;—dead to the world, but alive unto God;—afflicted in the flesh, but rejoicing in spirit; weak in health, but strong in mind;—downcast in countenance, but upright in conscience; burthened by toil, but strengthened in prayer;—bent under the weight of infirmities, but raised up again by interior consolations, and prisoned in this world by the bonds of the flesh, but in spirit rapt to heaven, and joined with Christ.

3. Blessed is he who has Jesus and Mary, the angels and saints of God for his friends in this life ; —for guides on his way—for advisers in doubt ;—for masters in his studies—for readers at his table ; —for companions in his solitude ;—for familiars in his conversation ;—for fellow-singers in choir ;—for guards in danger ;—for help in trials ;—for defenders against his enemies ;—for intercessors after sin ;—for assistance in his last hour ;—for comforters in his agony ;—for advocates in the day of judgment ; —for patrons before God ; and for joyous congratulations, introducing him to the courts of heaven !

O religious and devout soul, who hast forsaken the world, thy family and home, receive now God for thy father ; Jesus for thy brother ; Mary for thy mother ; the angels for thy friends ; and thy fellow-religious for thy relations.

Look on all the faithful as thy neighbours ; the old men as thy uncles ; the young men as thy brothers ; the married women as thy mothers ; the young maidens as thy sisters ; the poor as thy friends ; the travellers as thy cousins ; the meek and humble of heart as thy companions ; the sober and chaste as thy mess-mates ; the sick and afflicted as thy familiars ; the distressed and despised and scorned as the dear friends of thy heart ; the pious as those most worthy of honour ; and all those who despise the world, and serve Christ, as co-heirs in the kingdom of Heaven.

This is the holy generation and noble offspring born of God, pleasing to God, founded on faith, strengthened by hope, adorned by charity, armed with patience, proved by the fire of tribulation, and ever firm in constancy.



## CHAPTER XXX.

ON TRUE PEACE, TO BE SOUGHT FOR IN GOD ALONE.

“Peace be to you. It is I, be not afraid.”—JOHN vi. 20.

1. Christ Jesus is the foundation of our safety, and the only source of true peace.

He that loves Christ, enjoys peace and rest in him,—desires nothing out of him, nothing more than him.

The peace of the faithful soul here below consists in suffering for the love of God and in the name of Christ; and whoso thinketh otherwise, is in error, and deceiveth himself. Vain is the labour of him who placeth not God at the beginning of all his thoughts, of all his actions; who seeks not—desires not God alone. “There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God,” (Isaiah lvii. 21) but those who love thy law, O Lord, shall enjoy abundantly the sweetness of thy peace.

2. The peace which Christ taught and promised, is to be found in profound humility, in a complete denial of our own will, in the mortification of our depraved inclinations, in the contempt of worldly praise, and of all consolation in perishable and passing things.

Watch, then, over thy heart within, lest thou be seduced by its attractive deceit; and watch over thy senses without, lest thou seek for gratifications injurious to thy soul.

And yet created things often serve to our spiritual advancement, when we refer to the use made of them directly and entirely to the honour and glory of God:



or when used with moderation and discretion for our own pressing necessities, or for the good of our brethren.

3. But their beauty often becomes to us an occasion of sin, when beheld with looks full of curiosity—of concupiscence—of passion : for then they produce in our souls desires and affections contrary to the purpose and glory of God. Thus the unwary are often overcome by evil, and fall, where the wise and good are watchful to preserve their virtue.

Remember that riches tempt, money corrupts, and pleasure stains the soul ; that much feasting chokes it ; knowledge puffeth up ; power breeds self-sufficiency, and honours beget pride.

Perverse souls are disgusted with humility ; and vain, empty praise seduces the light and unstable.

There is not only absolute folly but downright frenzy in loving and seeking after pleasure, which cannot satisfy the soul nor give the heart repose ; for all that is of the world shall fail, and is of short duration : nothing but God is perfect, and nothing but him should we regard as sovereign beatitude and highest good.

4. Beware then, lest beauty of form, nobility of birth, or height of office, engross thy affections, and occupy thy mind, if thou wouldst not be deceived and lose the peace of thy heart, and the purity of thy soul. All things are vain, slippery, and hurtful, at least, if not referred to God, from whom cometh all good, and in whom all things live, and move, and have their being.

Glory not, then, O frail and mortal man, who in so many things art guilty, so prone to fall into sin,

so weak withal, and unable to stand in virtue ; trust not thyself overmuch, nor be too confident in thyself or others, by high thoughts and vain presumption, but offer and ascribe to God, without restriction or reserve, all the good thou perceivest, whether in thyself or others, or in any other created thing.

Then wilt thou find in Christ that peace of heart, and sweet repose, which may be vainly sought in all created things : then will be accomplished in thee and of thee, the sweet and holy promise of Christ on the mount, “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God”—(Matt. v. 8)—to whom be praise, honour, and glory, from every creature, now and for ages of ages. Amen.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

THAT OUR INTENTION SHOULD BE PURE AND ALWAYS  
DIRECTED TOWARDS GOD.

“My eyes are ever towards the Lord ; for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare.”—PSALM xxiv. 15.

1. In all thy thoughts, words, and actions, have always a right and pure intention towards God ; that so thou mayest do all things to His praise, honour, and glory, and to the edification of thy neighbour. For God is the source of all good, and the great giver of eternal rewards ; and if thou wouldst not lose the fruit of thy labours, He alone ought to be the beginning and sole end of all thy good works : and if thou wert fully penetrated with the terror of God’s righteous judgments, vanity would never take possession of thy heart.

2. Vain glory, and a desire of being praised in public by all, is a most deadly poison. It is most excessive vanity, and certain indication of pride, and directly opposed to the grace of God.

What then wilt thou do? or in whom wilt thou place thy hope and confidence? Not surely in thyself, nor in man, nor in earthly creatures, nor in the stars of heaven; but in God alone, thy Creator, who made and sustains thee, as well as all created things, by the might of His right hand, and He needs none as help or support. Call out, then, with the holy king David, "My eyes are ever towards the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare," Ps. xxiv. 15, adding these words, "Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hidden from thee." Ps. xxxviii. 10.

3. Renouncing then the deceitful consolations and counsels of men, fly in thy need unto thy God; place all thy trust in Him; call upon Him with fervent prayer and holy desires, for "He will pluck thy feet out of the snare, so that thou mayst be not moved out of the way" of virtue and true humility, but persevere steadfastly in the service of God unto the end.

Every good work done for the sake of God, maketh the conscience glad, brings light to the mind, and meriteth a greater increase of grace; but every bad action brings sorrow to him that commits it, stains his good name, and obstructs the influence of divine consolation.

He that doth anything through motives of vain glory, puts out his light with the wind of ostentation: and he who is virtuous that he may please men, and

stand high in their esteem, shall quickly be overthrown by an angry God, and grovel in the mire.

Rejoice not, then, like fools, in the smiles of the world, but rather let the sense of thy own frailty keep thee in the fear of God. Thy frequent falls and constant tendency to error, should teach thee to entertain an humble and mean opinion of thyself.

4. Beware of giving too much praise to any man in this life, for thou knowest not what he may become hereafter; neither rashly condemn him that falleth; for touched by his tears, God may shortly grant him grace to rise again. Pray for all men, and commend all unto God.

Be vile in thine own eyes, so shalt thou be great in the sight of God, who hath respect to the humble, but knowing the proud afar off, He will suddenly cast him down.

If thou art despised by men, and if others are preferred before thee, be not cast down into the excess of sadness; it is better and safer, doubtless, to be humbled by men, in company with the meek and simple, than to be cast off by God with the rich and the lofty-minded.

Shun the praises of men; fear to be exalted; blush at proffered honours; fly from human respect; strive rather to live secluded. Prefer, before all, the service due to God, the study of holy books, and perseverance in prayer.

That man is not without praise and honour, who, for the sake of God, despiseth praise and honour; nor is he without consolation, who holdeth all the joys of this world as nothing, and who gladly endureth everything contrary to his inclinations, for

the love of Christ, and whose daily aspirations and sighs are to be united to Him in heaven.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE PRAYER OF AN HUMBLE AND A CONTRITE SPIRIT.

“To thee have I lifted up my soul, O Lord, who dwellest in heaven.”—Ps. cxxii. 1.

1. O Lord God! whose wisdom and justice regulate all things in heaven and in earth, angels, men, and every created being, instead of the exalted praise and thanksgiving which are Thy due, vouchsafe to accept in offering, the tribulations and anguish of a heart truly sorry for its manifold transgressions. Whatever is of evil in me, do Thou turn into good; and the good, do Thou still convert into better! for the glory of Thy name, and the eternal salvation of my soul. Thou knowest all my infirmity, all my ignorance, and the wanted fickleness of my mind and memory; how quickly I wander hither and thither; very often alas! still farther from Thee. Spare me, O Lord, according to the multitude of Thy mercies, and direct my wandering footsteps to Thee. Preserve my heart in Thy presence, day and night ever engaged, as far as this frail body will bear, in devout prayer and holy meditation.

2. I desire, O Lord, to appease thy benign countenance with sacred offerings and prayers, particularly with the needy man's three mites, viz., contrition of heart, confession of mouth, and humble satis-

faction, O Lord my God, supremely loved, be mindful of me, Thy poor servant, since I am a weak mortal, not a pure angel; a vile sinner, not an innocent lamb; tepid in prayer, not fervent in contemplation. Therefore unworthy to be counted Thy servant, nor regarded among thy pious worshippers. O Lord God of my heart, deign then to accept the prayer of Thy humble servant; accept my bitter sorrow for past offences, as thou receivest the sweet songs and harmonious jubilations of all the celestial inhabitants. Although I often fall, and my soul is sad from my wretched frailty, still do I not, nor shall I ever, despair of Thy mercy and pardon.

Through the whole period of my life, I cease not, nor shall I ever cease, to sing Thy praise, but I shall ever honour and magnify Thy name, until my soul will go to seek Thee, my God; for to praise and love Thee above all things without cessation, is the supreme happiness of the angels and saints in Thy heavenly kingdom.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF HOLY FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS AND WITH HIS  
SAINTS.

“Seek ye after God, and your soul shall live.”—Ps. xlviii. 33.

1. There is nothing better, nothing more beneficial to the soul than to seek after God alone. He that seeketh any other thing, shall end by finding nothing.

If, therefore, thou wouldst have a friend to give



true consolation in affliction, go to Jesus; approach His crib with the shepherds, (Luke i.) come with the Magi, to adore Him in the arms of His mother; (Matt. ii.) follow Him to the temple with Simeon and Anna; (Luke ii.) to the city with Martha; (Luke x.) to the sepulchre, with Mary Magdalen; (Jo. xx.) or filled with sentiments of the most sweet and lively joy, join the apostles in the upper chamber, to receive with them the Holy Spirit. (Acts ii.)

Blessed is he that, in these and other holy places, devoutly seeks Jesus, not in body only, but in spirit and in truth.

Blessed is he who, at all times, and in every place, seeketh Jesus from the bottom of his heart, and who burns with an ardent desire to enjoy his presence, and to prepare himself every day for the bright vision and presence of Christ.

Blessed is he who in his life follows Jesus to Calvary, and bears his cross with him; for his divine Saviour shall assist him in his last hour, and he shall not fear the sentence of reprobation destined for the wicked.

2. Seek not only Jesus, but the disciples of Jesus; and all that love Jesus, and all who, for his love, bear patiently the pains and sorrows of this life; for the love of Jesus and his friends maketh a man despise the world, and driveth away all that is impure or vain.

Renounce then those friends, those acquaintances, those companions, who would offer an obstruction in thy retreat or devotion; and for thy singular consolation, seek in secret retirement to entertain thyself with the holy apostles, and brethren of Jesus, that they may speak to thee of the kingdom of God, and



declare how great is the happiness of the elect ; and how, by passing through many tribulations, thou mayest attain their happy society.

Come then before all holy saints, men or women, citizens of the heavenly court, withdraw thyself from the tumult of the world, retire into the secret tabernacle and oratory of the blessed Virgin Mary, and seek there by constant prayer, for all necessary consolation.

3. Listen to the angel of the Lord, announcing to Mary the incarnation of Christ, and the redemption of the human race.

O blessed day and happy hour ! if thou canst rest there in company with the angel Gabriel, and the blessed Virgin Mary, and learn from their mouths the mysteries of heaven ; believing most firmly in the truth of all things which were declared by the angel to Mary, even as she believed God, and his angel sent from heaven.

Then turn to the desert, and seek diligently John the Baptist, the precursor of our Lord Jesus Christ, where he lies hid ; and on bended knees humbly say with much devotion :—

“ Hail, John, the most holy and beloved friend of Jesus Christ, I have often heard of thy many virtues, and the wonders of thy admirable life ; I have heard of the miraculous sanctity of thy birth ; I have heard with what religious austerity thou livedst in the desert from thine infancy, that so thou mightest preserve thy spotless purity in word and thought.”

4. Ask of him how long he remained alone in the desert, and dwell with him there as long as thou canst, or time will allow.

Learn of him what was his meat or his drink, and who ministered to his wants; see if his father or mother sent anything to him; or whether they came to him, or he to them; or whether the angel Gabriel descended on him to reveal to him many hidden things, or even whether Jesus appeared in person to him, and strengthened his hand, as it is written in the gospel: "For the hand of the Lord was with him." (Luke i. 66.)

Whatsoever revelations St. John the Baptist had been favoured with in the desert, do thou commit thyself entirely to the Holy Spirit, with whom he was filled, by whom he was instructed, who formed him, and adorned his life with all virtues; who, in the desert, in the world, in prison, and in chains, watched over him, and received his soul at last, as it bore away the glorious palm of martyrdom.

5. Approach then to the apostles of Christ; seek out St. Peter, and follow him to the temple to pray, or ascend with him into the upper chamber, "to receive the Holy Spirit." (Acts ii.)

Follow St. Paul to Damascus, to Ephesus, and go with him through all dangers, to preach the gospel of Christ, not in body, but in spirit.

Behold how his labours exceed all; how often he prays, and how frequently in his prayers and meditations he is rapt up into heaven.

It is true these great favours are not vouchsafed to all; and yet the apostle humbling himself to the lowest says, "I do not count myself to have apprehended;" (Phil. iii. 13) and elsewhere, when teaching the humble, that they ought to conform themselves to the life and passion of Jesus Christ, he

says, "I judged not myself to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

Follow, then, St. Paul, for he will lead thee by the straight path unto Christ, and by the way of the cross to heaven.

6. Go then further, and in the parts of Achaia, listen to the apostle Andrew, preaching the faith of Christ; hear his words from the cross on which he was nailed, for the name of Jesus Christ; engrave them on thy heart, and study to fulfil with joy, through the inspiration and assistance of the Holy Spirit, all that he declares of the passion of Christ, and the praises of the holy cross.

Seek then St. James the Greater, who suffered martyrdom under Herod; drink, with him, of the chalice of sorrow in this miserable life;—bearing patiently with all suffering, for the love of God, and the salvation of thy soul.

7. Next proceed, and seek John, the beloved apostle of Christ, who, for the name of Jesus, was sent into exile; and separated from the world, and all its cares and concerns; where, enlightened by divine revelation, he wrote in symbolic and mysterious style in the Apocalypse, the state of the church militant and triumphant; and after this, he wrote his gospel, to instruct and console all churches, and all the faithful therein, and give testimony, last of all, to the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Read and study well these, and the other books of Holy Scripture, as much as thy understanding will allow, and thy wants require in this thy exile, here on earth; not with a view to pass for wise and learned,

in the eyes of men, but that thou mayest become meek and patient, humble and obedient even unto death.

8. Go also, and for thy consolation seek the other apostles, employed in the service of God, enduring martyrdom for the faith and love of Christ, and leading the faithful to virtue, both by their example and by their words.

Behold St. James, the brother of our Lord, writing his canonical epistle, wherein is contained the rule of a christian life, and the whole perfection of our religion.

Seek St. Thomas in the Indies; that apostle who reverently touched the wounds of Christ, and who, believing firmly, cried out with an ardent love, "My Lord and my God." (John xx. 28.)

With a like holy zeal, seek the holy apostle and learned evangelist Matthew, writing, in the Hebrew character, the gospel of Christ, for the instruction of all the world, and for the salvation of all people, and nations and tongues.

With an equal ardour and affection, follow the other holy apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ; each one, in the several relations and places, preserving the word of life, teaching the people, and labouring unto death in the vineyard of the Lord.

Behold these are the saints and friends of God, who, at the price of their blood, and by the crown of martyrdom, merited eternal life. Read with pleasure the recital of their labours and sufferings, and thou wilt be consoled in thy labours, and light affliction; for whatever thou mayest do or suffer, it is as nothing in comparison with that which the martyrs,

and all the blessed have done and suffered for Christ in the service of God.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON PLACING OUR SOVEREIGN GOOD AND FARTHEST AIM  
IN GOD ALONE.

“ I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.”—  
Ps. xvi. 15.

1. *The Soul*.—O Lord, how shall man attain to this glory?

*Jesus Christ*.—By the contempt of himself, and all earthly things, and by an ardent love of all heavenly things.

The saints who rejoice in heaven, and all the faithful who still combat here below, against the allurements of sin, are my witnesses for this.

But those who are far from attaining the eternal glory and sovereign beatitude, are the proud angels of darkness, the infidel Pagans, the perverse Jews, hardened heretics, and carnal men, who seduced by the pleasures of the world, and neglecting the service of God, propose no other end in all their actions, than the enjoyment of earthly goods, the honour and esteem of men.

Ah! woe is me, O God;—such infatuated persons are driven about in every sense, in painful journeys, in severe study, in constant watchings, solicitous without ceasing, and labouring without relaxation, to increase and preserve those enjoyments which make them slaves to their desires: and when they have

received a part of what they thirst for, when they have obtained directly or indirectly the object of their labours, still are they not satisfied; they wish to rise still higher, for their vanity will leave nothing below them; they puff themselves up, and think themselves wise and worthy of the esteem of man, and the homage of their brethren. Howbeit in all this, what is there but vanity, frailty, and nothing; whatsoever they desire, whatever they seek, is lost as regards the great work of their salvation, and full of danger to the welfare of their souls.

2. In very deed ye are in error and deceive yourselves, ye who in the world find sweetness, ye for whom this present world is full of pleasantness; for none of these enjoyments are secure, and every day you draw nearer to death, and to the judgment of God.

For there is nothing in this world so agreeable, but what has annexed to it somewhat of bitterness; whatsoever of loveliest, best, and sweetest, created things can offer you—all are insufficient to satisfy the soul; they cannot deliver it from evil; they cannot fill it with good, nor keep it in endless joy; God alone, who is eternal, immense, and sovereignly good, God alone can produce in us these blessed effects. He is the creator of all things, visible and invisible, of angels and men, before all, above all, and in all, God blessed for ever.

3. Can the blessed spirit in Heaven, or those on earth, think or speak worthily of Him? Ah no! for he is above all that a created being can conceive, and in His sight all things are vain and valueless. Miserably deceived is the unhappy soul, that, apart



from God, seeks and fosters those affections which would turn it away from the love and honour of God, but which will leave it at the end in poverty and abject indigence.

#### A PRAYER.

4. O Lord, great and wonderful are thy works! and to fathom or understand any one of them, is not possible for me or any other living creature. What therefore shall I do, whereas I am unable either to comprehend things so far above my capacity, penetrate the secrets of heaven, or contemplate, in company with angels, the face of my God? I confess myself unworthy to enjoy happiness so great, and converse with the saints in heaven. Therefore will I humble and despise myself, before God and man, as long as I live, and I will be as nothing in my own eyes; that God may have pity on me a miserable sinner, now, and all the days of my life.

In the bitterness of my soul, I shall think over my past years, in which I have provoked His wrath and indignation, and with groans and weeping I will appease my God, whom I have so often offended by words, by deeds, by seeing, by hearing, and by the other senses; which had been given to me to serve my Creator, with all my heart, all the days of my sojourn here below.

But lest I should become dejected and fall into despair on account of my numerous transgressions, I will call to mind, O Lord, the multitude of Thy mercies which are from eternity; until by Thy divine grace and favour, I may be enabled to reach thee in



safety. Deliver me, O Lord, from all those dangers and calamities which so often assail me unprepared, and frequently distract my mind from the contemplation of Thy heavenly goods. Assist me, O God infinitely good, and place me nigh unto Thee, lest I should begin to wander far from my Supreme good, which Thou art, O my God ! For in Thee alone is all my good. Give me Thyself, and it sufficeth my soul, O Lord, thou god of my salvation. Amen.

# MEDITATIONS.

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## FIRST MEDITATION.

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE  
TESTIMONIES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

SEARCH the scriptures, saith our Lord. (John v.) O most sweet Lord Jesus, grant that I thy unworthy servant may devoutly ponder the holy Mystery of thy Incarnation: and though I understand it not, make me humbly to respect it, and always to render thee Thanks for so great a favour, and so unspeakable a charity. I am greatly delighted with the consideration of this mystery, and among all the wonders which thou hast wrought, it relishes more sweetly, it affects more vehemently, ties more forcibly, and transports my whole heart in thee. Grant therefore that I may more frequently be conversant in it, and more diligently consider it, as it was foreknown and foretold by thy holy prophets. "Open mine eyes: and I shall consider the marvellous things of thy law."

(Psalm. cxviii. 18.) For thou art the Law-maker : Thou the inspirer and instructor of the prophets, by whose oracles thou art prefigured wonderful ways ; sometimes openly, and sometimes again obscurely, as the whole course of the Old Testament makes evident to such as read it, for nothing there is devoid of Mystery, but most faithful testimonies, as well of thy divinity, as of thy humanity, are contained therein. And though thou needest no human testimonies, who art truth itself, and who at thy pleasure makest men Prophets ; yet for our instruction, and the confirmation of our faith, it was thy blessed will to have these things foretold, and written, long before, and also to accompany these predictions with such a height of authority, that none durst in any sort contradict them ; to the end that when thou shouldst be present in body thou shouldst be acknowledged to be the king of Israel, and the Saviour of the world, whom so many passages of Scripture had foretold to be to come. And this is that which thou didst answer in presence of the doctors who believed not, but curiously observed, and deceitfully tempted thee : Search the Scriptures, wherein you apprehend eternal life to be had. For those are they which give testimony of me." (John v.)

Yes, Lord, thy patriarchs, thy prophets, and the rest of the faithful give testimony of thy incarnation. For Abraham the first of the patriarchs, by the merits of thy faith, and his perfect obedience, received this promise : " In thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. xxii.) In which seed verily, thou wert designed and prefigured, who being born of the Virgin Mary, didst take thy true origin of the flesh of

Adam, and of the stock of Abraham, who didst also extend this benediction to all the nations of the universe, saying : who believes, and is baptised, shall be saved. (Mat. 16.) This benediction, I say, is not an earthly but a heavenly promise ; not a transitory blessing, but a permanent felicity : an immortal life together with the angels ; not a temporal continuance, which as it was promised to the faithful Abraham, so by thee, he and all his faithful posterity, had the performance of it : For not they alone who are born of Abraham according to the flesh, are the sons of the promise, but they also who follow the footsteps of his faith, are blessed likewise, whether they issued carnally from him, or whether spiritually regenerated out of the other nations. And therefore was he styled the father of many nations, not of the Jews alone, but of all the nations, which throughout the world believed in thee.

3. Isaac also, Abraham's son, gives a clear testimony of thee by his actions : for his nativity foretold by the angels, gave a presage of thy nativity, which yet doth far excel the measure of all that ever were born. He by the promise of the angel was born of a barren mother : but thou being promised from the beginning of the world, was born of a Virgin Mother, after a far more unspeakable manner. His birth brought joy to his parents and friends ; but thine afforded singular joy to men and angels. The miracle wrought in the aged and sterile womb, gave great confidence of the virginal birth. Thou therefore who wrought that in thy poor and abject servant, couldst certainly perform infinitely more in thine own person. For whereas thou art

the Creator of nature itself, thou hast all under thy power, without being bound or limited by any law or custom. There appears also a type of thy passion in him, when his father was commanded to sacrifice him, by the voice of an angel. He carried the wood on which he was to make a self holocaust : thou the wood of the cross, to blot out the handwriting of our original offence. He was bound, and straightways put upon the altar ; thou wast bound and cruelly beaten, and in the end nailed to the cross, that thou mightest draw all to thyself. He was obedient to his father Abraham : and thou didst obey God thy father even to the death of the cross. He is offered but is not slain, because he is but the type, thou the truth : he the sign, thou the true sacrifice. He was not to die because he was not the Redeemer of the world : but thou wast to die ; yet not for thine own, but for our crimes ; because thou, being the true Redeemer of the world, was born to this effect, and hadst received this command from thy heavenly Father.

4. Again Jacob, the patriarch, gives testimony to this truth. He being taught by a prophetic spirit, foretold many things to his sons which were after to happen ; for he prophesied of what tribe thou wast to be born, and at what time thou wast to come, when blessing his son Juda, he said amongst other things : “ The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he do come that is to be sent, and the same shall be the expectation of the Gentiles.” (Gen. xlix.) Which testimony being rightly understood, is undoubtedly fulfilled in thee who drew thy unworthy origin from the tribe of

Juda; and didst enter into this world in the time when the lawful ruler failed in Judea, and when Herod, the king of a foreign nation, did there hold the principality. Thou art not therefore still to be expected, as the Jews foolishly pretend, but we believe thou art already come, God in flesh, as the Christians profess according to the Catholic faith. Certainly the ruler failed in Judea, nor was there any law in it. Priesthood was not heard of, the temple fell to the ground, the kingdom perished, the nation was dispersed all over the earth, that all the world might know, that thou who art Israel's Saviour, the expectation of the Gentiles, and those they so much desired art come. (Gen. xlix. Agg. 2.) The old law was therefore to cease as soon as new grace and truth appeared here below in thy person. Because all that ancient institution was to bear testimony of thee.

5. To this doth the voices of the prophets agree, who, foreknowing the time of thy coming, foretold the days of grace wherein we live. For Moses, the lawgiver and teacher of the people of Israel, gives a wonderful and credible testimony:—"The Lord God shall raise unto thee a Prophet, such as I am, of thine own nation, and of thine own brethren (Deut. 10.) Moses who was to speak to a rude people, termed thee a prophet simply, as perhaps not judging them, then, capable of a higher name. Which may also be gathered out of the Gospel, when the voice of the people was heard at the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes. "This man is truly the prophet which is to come into the world." (John vi.) But we now being endowed with a more certain



truth, and a higher knowledge of faith, do confess and believe thee truly to be, not only a prophet, but the Lord of the Prophets, and the true Son of God. Nor is it strange that thou didst speak many things obscurely to that people by thy servant Moses ; and many more manifestly to us by thy own mouth ; for so it was agreeable to the order of justice, to the law and to grace. Moses then, through a desire of thy coming, prayed and said, “ I beseech thee, O Lord, send whom thou art about to send.” (Exod. iv.) This Moses was he, who was sent into Egypt to deliver the children of Israel ; to whom also power was imparted by words, signs, and wonders. He did great and unheard of things, which excite no small admiration in the hearer or reader. Yet when they are mystically understood, and duly referred to thee, they possess pious and faithful hearts, with a higher sense and a more sovereign comfort. He leads the children out of the land of Egypt ; Thou deliveredst thy elect out of the devil’s captivity, and the prison of hell. He leads them through the Red Sea, Pharaoh being drowned, and brought them to the land of Promise ; Thou leadest thy faithful through the waters of baptism, original sin being blotted out, and make them enter into a heavenly mansion. He received the old law of the ten commandments written on tables of stone on Mount Sinai, and delivered them to the people to be kept. But thou being made the Mediator of the new law, preached the law of grace to thy disciples on the mountain, which thou deeply imprinted in their hearts by the spirit of love. He walked forty years in the desert, with the children of Israel, and was famous among them for many



signs and prodigies. Thou (John xxi.) living on earth the space of thirty-three years, and conversing amongst men, didst give so many signs and arguments of thy divine power, that the world could hardly contain them had they all been written. He executed the part of a faithful servant, thou that of Lord and Master, and the only begotten Son of the Father. Thou art God, and therefore neither he, nor any one among men or angels is comparable to thee. The Holy Ghost is imparted to others in a certain proportion, but thou sharest always equal power with thy heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost; and dost possess even according to thy humanity, (Heb. i.) an excellency of singular dignity far above all the saints, which is communicable to no creature. "For to which of the angels was it ever said: thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, (Heb. i., Psalm clxix.) Or who among the saints ever heard the Father saying unto him: "Sit at my right hand?" (Matt. xxviii.) It is much for an angel to be thy minister, a great honour for any of thy saints to sit at thy table in thy Father's kingdom; but to thee all power was given in heaven and on earth. And though thou didst appear mortal in the substance of flesh, yet art thou indeed the unchangeable God above all things, taking upon thee what is ours without losing what is thy own. We do therefore undoubtedly and constantly profess thee to be Christ, God's only begotten, the Saviour of the world, promised in the law, desired by the patriarchs, foreseen and foretold by the prophets. To whose testimonies if any hesitate to give credit, he deprives himself of the light of truth, not holding the foundation where-

upon he should place his feet, nor looking upon the shining lanterns in the dark place, for the law is a light, and the prophets precious lanterns leading us to thee the true light of the soul, that they that believe in thee may be saved by faith, (Heb. xi.) Because without faith and a knowledge of thy name, there is no hope of life, no assurance of salvation, for thou art our salvation and our hope, and our redemption, whom the saints expected, to whom the promise was made.

6. And this our salvation promised in thee by many types of things, and by many and wonderful visions, went long before, and lay hidden. But by the celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation and Passion, those secrets were manifested and accomplished. The paschal lamb therefore which was commanded to be offered every year in remembrance of our ancient deliverance out of the land of Egypt, prefigured thee. (Exod. xii.) So did also the oblation of calves and rams; the burning of sweet perfumes; the sundry celebration of sacrifices, and the frequent sprinkling of blood. (Exod. xxix.) Again thou art mysteriously prefigured by the golden candlestick with seven lights; (Exod. xxv.) as also by the high priest who entered but once a year into the "Holy of Holies." But thou didst at once, by the sacrifice of thy body offered up on the altar of the cross, consummate and put a period to all those legal sacrifices. (Heb. ix.) And therefore there is now no more utility in the worship of those former sacrifices, because thou, O eternal truth, hast made known unto us what they signified. They are read by our doctors amongst the faithful, and being spiritually

discussed and made use of, they serve profitably to our edification, and their mystical sense we willingly receive ; but we admit not their observance according to the letter. And if thou wast anciently pleased with such sacrifices, this was done by hidden faith, which was to be revealed. But now those old sacrifices are ended, and the new sacrifice is come, which the holy church celebrates with a faithful devotion throughout the world. The rock also, whence sweet waters flowed to a thirsty people : (Deut. viii.) the manna which yielded wonderful food to the hungry (Deut. viii.) the brazen serpent which was erected to cure those that were bitten or stung. (Num. xxi.) The flourishing rod of Aaron producing nuts gave a clear foreknowledge of thee. (Num. xvii.) Joshua too, who was famous both for his name and actions, the victorious Gideon ; (lib. Joshua.) the strong Samson, (lib. Indicium.) Samuel the most faithful prophet : (1 Reg.) the known virtue of the Nazarites, and all the judges did wonderfully express thee. (Num. vi.)

7. David the glorious king and prophet, and inspired psalmist, chosen according to God's own heart, doth plainly sing to thee, devoutly pray unto thee, and ardently desire thy coming, saying : "Bow down, O Lord, the heavens, and descend." (Psalm cxliii.) "Stir up thy power and come, that thou may save us." (Psalm lxxix.) "Show us, O Lord, thy mercy, and give us thy salvation." (Psalm lxxxiv.) "Where are thine ancient mercies, O Lord, as thou swearest to thy servant David." (Psalm lxxxviii.) By these and other requests he frequently lays open the ardent desire of his heart whilst he sings his psalms. He

brings yet higher testimonies than these to the unveiled eyes of the heart. (Psalm l.) This is the holy David, to whom thou didst reveal the uncertain and hidden mysteries of thy wisdom, and to whom thou didst promise that thou wast to be incarnated out of his stock or line. This is David, beautiful of body, strong of hand, provident in counsel, wise in words, mild in injuries, humble in his own eyes, an observer of the law, foreteller of the gospel, and a true witness of thy coming. He did most fully prophesy thy Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension. Thou art therefore he of whom he said: "He placed his tabernacle in the sun, and he came out of his bed-chamber like a bridegroom: he exulted like a giant to run in the way; His coming out was from the highest heaven." (Psalm xviii.)

Thou art the truth which sprung up out of the earth: (Psalm lxxxiv.) thou art justice which looked out from heaven and reconciled us to God the Father after our fall. (Psalm xlv.) Thou art beautiful and comely above the sons of men. Grace is diffused in thy lips. Yes, thou art he, from whom mercy and grace was derived upon all men. (Psalm lxxiii.) Thou art God, our king before all ages, who wroughtest salvation in the midst of the earth. Thou art a man born in Judea, whose name was permanent for ever and ever. Thou didst descend upon Mary like dew; (Psalm lxxi.) and thou didst spread thy wholesome doctrine like dew dropping down upon the ground. (Psalm cix.) Thou wast begotten of the Father before the day star, and now being clad with our mortal garment thou remainest a Priest for ever, (Psalm cix.) constituted by God according to the

order of Melchisedech. (Ibid.) Thou didst drink an undeserved death and passion of the torrent in the way for our sakes, suffering like a true traveller, and therefore in the day of thy resurrection thou didst put on fortitude and comeliness. Nor didst thou suffer the corruption of the flesh as we do; but didst raise up the very same flesh wherein thou hast suffered, to immortal life, (Psalm lxvi.) in which thou didst ascend with jubilation, the angels rejoicing thereat, from whence thou art to come upon the trumpet's sound at the day of judgment. And thus are David's faithful verses fulfilled which are written in divers passages of the Psalms.

8. O Jesus, the only desire of the prophets: thou art the Emmanuel whom a Virgin conceived, a Virgin brought forth, remaining a Virgin after her childbirth: of whom Isaiah evidently and amply prophesied: "A little child is born to us, (Isaiah vii.) and a son is given to us, and his principality is made upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Marvellous, Counsellor, God, Strong, Father of the world to come, Prince of peace: His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace." (Isaiah ix.) Thou art the root of Jesse who standest as a sign to the people, whom the Gentiles shall sue to; whose sepulchre is seen glorious even to this day. (Isaiah ix.) Thou art the flower which springs from the root of Jesse, upon whom the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of our Lord doth rest. (Isaiah xi.) Thou art the Lamb which conquers the world, being sent from the rock of the desert, to the mountain of the

daughter of Zion. (Isaiah xvi.) Thou art the mountain of the house of our Lord, prepared on the top of the mountains, raised above the hills, to whom all nations do run, to receive of thy plenitude. (Isaiah ii.) Thou art the light of Jerusalem, and glory of Israel, whose rising and brightness doth enlighten the world. (Isaiah cix.) Thou art the stone which is tried, a corner, precious foundation stone laid in Zion. (Isaiah xxviii.) Thou art our Lord's blossom in magnificence, and the sublime fruit of the earth, sitting now at the right hand of God the Father, all the principalities and powers of the earth being brought under thy feet. (Isaiah iv.) Thus said Isaiah, who foresaw future things with a great spirit, and comforted all the mourners of Zion, with thy coming, whereupon he also saith: "Be comforted my people, saith your Lord God: because even I that spoke, lo I am here present. (Isaiah xl.) O with how ardent a desire did he wish that the promise of thy Incarnation should be accomplished, with the fortitude of boldness he cried out: "O that thou wouldst burst the heavens asunder and descend, (Isaiah lxiv.) at thy presence the mountains would melt away. Who also not being able to repress the vehemence of his desire, but was careful to make it openly known to all the world, said again: "For Zion I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem I will not rest, until her just one come forth as brightness, and her Saviour be kindled as a lamp; (Isaiah lxii.) and who is able to found all the mysterious sayings, which he put down, especially of thy incarnation, passion, glorification, and expectation of thy judgment; as also of the vocation of the Gentiles, and preaching of the



holy gospel. He relates things to come in the same sort as though they were past; so doth he deliver every thing in particular, as though he had seen them all with his eyes. As indeed he did see them with the eyes of his understanding, not with those of flesh. For heavenly mysteries are discovered with spiritual eyes, which the sensual man cannot comprehend. Whence it was that the pharisees could not raise their thoughts to the majesty of thy divinity; because they viewed only exteriorly thy corporeal presence in beholding thee. But Isaiah was divinely illuminated, and gave testimony of the inspired truth of both natures. For thus he saith of the divine nature: "I saw our Lord sit upon a sublimely high seat, and all the earth was replenished with his majesty: (Isaiah vi.) and of his humanity thus: "We saw him and he had no aspect, and we esteemed him as a leprous person, and one smitten by God, and humbled. (Isaiah lii., liii.) And he was wounded for our iniquities, he was torn for our crimes.

In like manner the holy prophet Jeremiah bears testimony of thee, when he thus describes the great mystery of inheritance: "our Lord," saith he, "created a new thing upon earth, a woman shall environ a man." (Jeremiah xxxi.) And what is so new, O Lord Jesus, as thy conception by the Holy Ghost, thy nativity of a Virgin? This is a mystery that the world never heard of, which neither before nor after shall ever have any thing like unto it. O truly happy mystery, by which old iniquity is put to flight: and new sanctity is introduced in her place. Hail then new mother, rejoice O Mary. Thou art that blessed woman, of whom this prophet speaks, and



who hast merited to be overjoyed with this most happy birth : for thou didst contain him in thy immaculate womb, being made higher than all creatures, whom they were not all capable of : for though thou hadst, for a long time with thee, a little one, endowed with tender limbs, shut up within thy virgin womb ; yet Jesus, though not yet born, was a man, in power though not in body ; by the perfection of wisdom, not by the time of his age. Yea and as soon as ever he was conceived he was replenished with grace and truth. And by thus understanding that passage of Jeremiah, we make good that the mystery was truly great.

10. In Baruch also, is a memorable testimony found : “ this is our Lord, and there shall be none other esteemed against him. After this he was seen, and he conversed amongst men.” (Baruch iii.)

11. The prophet Ezekiel, who had seen many heavenly mysteries, saith what follows, particularly pointing thee out thereby : “ And upon the likeness of the throne, there was as it were the aspect of a man from above. (Ezekiel i.) And again : “ there was one man in the midst of them, was clothed with linen garments, and the inkhorn of a writer at his reins.” (Ezekiel ix.) He doth also touch the admirable mystery of thy most sacred nativity, when he received a heavenly answer from the east gate. “ This gate shall be shut and it shall not be opened : and man shall not pass through it :” because the God of Israel passed through it ; “ and it shall be shut for the Prince.” Thou art that prince, and Mary the closed gate, who as well in conceiving as in bringing forth, remained always an unspotted virgin.

12. Daniel, a man of heavenly desires and a knower of sublime secrets, whilst he wisely interpreted king Nebuchadnezzar's dream, did indeed faithfully foretell thy coming. "Thou didst," saith he, "so see until the stone was hewn from the mountain, without hand, which struck the statue in its iron and feigned feet, and broke them in pieces, the stone which broke the statue became a great mountain and it filled the whole earth." (Daniel ii.) Thou art represented by that stone, who wast cut out of the mountain, that is, out of the kingdom of the Jews: "without hands;" that is, without any material labour, born of a virgin. Who didst smite the statue in the feet, who didst wonderfully crush down the pomp of earthly majesty, as well by words as worders, even amidst the heat of persecutions. And thou becamest like a great mountain, and thou didst fill the whole universe. Because being at first known to a few in Judea only, thou afterwards becamest known to the whole world, by the shining light of the gospel. Daniel produces yet another testimony, saying: "I beheld in my vision by night, and behold the Son of man came with the clouds, and he came to the ancient of days, and they offered him in his sight, and endowed with power, honour and reign, and all people, tribes and tongues shall serve him. His power shall be an eternal power which shall not be taken away from him; nor shall his kingdom be corrupted." What is more clear than this testimony, wherein both thy coming, as well in flesh, as in judgment is evidently foretold?

13. Michael gives so clear a testimony, that neither the Scribes nor Pharisees being questioned

upon it, could not conceal the same. For when Herod asked them where Christ should be born, they made answer, according to the words of this Prophet: "In Bethlehem Judah;" for so the same blessed prophet saith: "and thou Bethlehem Ephrata art a little one in the thousands of Judah: out of thee shall come forth unto me he that shall be the ruler of Israel, and his coming forth from the beginning, from the days of eternity." (Micah v.) In which words the truth of both thy nativities is clearly set out, in the one that eternal coming from thy father: in the other thy temporal coming from thy mother is expressed.

14. Abacuc, the prophet, is continually upon his guard, and makes a stand to hear what may be delivered of things to come, and that he may contemplate thee upon the cross. "As yet," saith he, "he is seen afar off, and he shall appear in the end, and shall not lie: if he makes some delay, expect him, for he shall come quickly and shall not delay." (Abacuc ii.) And of thy passion thus: "his brightness shall be as the light, horns in his hands, there is his strength hid, before his face shall death go." (Abacuc iii.) Thou went forth the salvation of thy people, salvation with thy Christ. (Abac. iii.) He above all the other Prophets doth express thy most sweet name, which exceeds every other name, saying: "But I will rejoice in our Lord, I will exult in God my Jesus."

15. Sophonias composeth a consoling prophecy, and raises up the mind which is weary with long expectation to a spiritual joy: "Rejoice" saith he, "O daughter of Sion: and thou, O Israel, sing with

joy. Rejoice and exult in every heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The king of Israel, our Lord in the midst of thee, he will save thee." (Sophon. iii.)

16. Aggeus did also prophesy, saying: "Yet a little, and I will shake heaven and earth, the sea, and dry land, and I will move all the nations, and the desired of all nations will come." (Aggeus ii.)

17. Zacharias also gives testimony with a joyful heart, and foretels sundry things, saying, "Praise and rejoice, O thou daughter of Sion, because, lo, I will come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee." (Zach. ii.) And again, "Exult enough, O daughter of Zion, make jubilation, O Jerusalem, behold thy king comes to thee, the just and saviour, himself poor and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Zach. ix.) Thou didst accomplish this prophecy, when thou didst enter into Jerusalem sitting upon the back of a poor contemptible ass. And lest we might doubt whether that were foretold of thee, that is added which leaves no place of doubting, since we already see it by experience: "And he shall speak, saith he, peace to the Gentiles, and his power from sea even to sea." Which thing was faithfully accomplished by the preachers of the gospel, who announced peace to those that were near at hand, and to those who were far off. After this he descends to the passion, showing how thou should redeem the world with thy precious blood. "Thou also in the blood of thy testament, hast let forth thy prisoners out of the lake wherein is no water." (ibidem.) Many other testimonies did this prophet and the rest of the prophets produce, whereof not a few are inserted in the New Testament.

Nor ought the reader be moved to distrust, if now and then he find some testimonies differently related by the prophets and the evangelists. For the evangelists deliver that briefly and clearly (as being endowed with a more plentiful assistance of the Holy Ghost) which the prophets deliver in a long discourse with much obscurity.

18. Remain not therefore any longer, O Jew or Gentile, in thy infidelity, having heard truth delivered by such a multitude of witnesses. Acknowledge Christ's incarnation, foretold by the mouths of the prophets, and fulfilled. If you give not credit to our scriptures, consult your own books, and so you shall find it even there too. Remove only the carnal understanding of them, and do not with a mad boldness, defend the bare letter, search out the spiritual sense, and apply your hearts to Christ's mysteries, if you desire to attain to the sound and wholesome meaning of the scriptures. If otherwise abstracting from Christ, you glory in the law or the prophets, your glory is vain, and your understanding which you follow is blind. Moses will not at all profit you, if you hear not Christ of whom Moses wrote. Nor will the prophets be of any advantage to you unless you receive the Lord of the prophets. In vain do you seek to be justified by the law, since many fathers were found just even before the law was established. By faith Noah was called just. And Abraham believing in God, had the praise of justice before circumcision. Do not therefore boast the nobility of your kindred, nor the virtues of your forefathers, nor that the Holy Scriptures, replenished with heavenly promises, were delivered unto you,

because God regards the hearts of the humble, and looks upon the faith of true believers. And therefore you shall be glorious and acceptable to God, if by belief in Christ, you imitate the faith and manners of your forefathers: who indeed placed not the confidence of their merit of justice in the observance of the law, nor in the multitude of their victims, nor yet in their own works, but in the only grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For so God promised by the prophet Isaiah. "You were sold gratis, and you shall be redeemed without money." (Isa. lii.) Behold! O Jew behold! and be converted to Jesus Christ the true light of the world. He is the Lord that rules, and the angel of the testament, as Malachias said: "he came to save all nations, though peculiarly sent to thee." (Malachi iii.) But alas, he was neither acknowledged nor received by many of thy children. Verily if thou dost believe that he is come thou shalt be saved, if not, he shall come against thee, and thou wilt be damned. "If you believe not that I am, you shall die in your sin." (John viii.) What excuse can you bring, to defend thy error? Thou hast indeed the law and the prophets, but they are rather thy accusers than thy defenders, and shall give in evidence against thee that thou would not believe. Moses saith, "Give ear O you rebels, and infidels; because whilst I yet lived among you, and walked along with you, you dealt always contentiously against our Lord, how much more when I shall be dead? (Numbers xx.) This obduracy remains still in the end in thy seed to this day. But when thou shalt be converted, God will be propitious unto thee as well as to the



other nations. Be converted, be converted to our Lord Jesus Christ of Israel, and thou shalt be no more a reproach among the Gentiles. For two things especially detain thee in thy perfidiousness; love of temporalities, and thy carnal understanding of the scriptures. But yet, O Jerusalem, lift up thine eyes, and look round about thee; and see, O Israel, the multitude of faithful christians spread over all the world, and blush to be found still in error, while by believing thou mayest obtain eternal salvation. Let not the multitude of such as live negligently, who by penance may be easily converted, scandalize thee; but rather look upon examples of good christians, whereof thousands are never wanting in God's church, however they may be hid from the eyes of men.

But now leaving the Jews, O my soul, let us return to Christ, for he is indeed thy redemption and thy salvation. If the Jew will not believe, yet remain thou firm in the faith that Jesus is the Son of God, as all the prophets do witness, who were divinely inspired and instructed, which if the Jews believe they would also believe the Gospel of Christ, as he said unto them: "if you did believe Moses, you would happily believe me too; because he wrote of me." (John v.) But it is no wonder that carnal men, and following visible things alone, refuse to believe him, whereas the law is spiritual, and admits none into the knowledge of it but spiritual persons. Now, whereas our Lord Jesus Christ came humble, he was not known by them, though they otherwise read in the prophets that he should come in that manner. But the miserable creatures stumbled



upon the Rock of offence and scandal, contemning his humility, and blaspheming him whilst he wrought wonders. Whilst thou hearest these things, O my soul, be thou like a prudent man, detesting their perfidious madness, and humbly following the faith of the pious. Nor let the wickedness of multitudes, and the piety of a few deter thee, knowing that it is the saying of our Lord; that there are many called, but few chosen. (Matt. xx and xxii.) Nor indeed doth this inquisition belong to thee, since this discerning judgment appertains to God alone; turn thou thy eyes upon thyself, and observe what great blessings are bestowed upon thee, and cease not from giving what thanks thou art able for thy own vocation and illumination. Rejoice and exalt with thy whole heart in God thy Saviour, that he hath pleased to visit thee, coming from the highest heaven. For the whole business was nothing else but an argument of grace and exceeding love, that he who was only able to assist thee deigned to come in such an humble manner. For though he made himself a debtor to his promise, yet was his gracious liberality no less in thy behalf, since his blessings were bestowed upon thee without any preceding merits.

20. O truly great and venerable mystery, hid from the world; promised by many forerunning witnesses; long expected; ardently desired; and at length given, and faithfully commended to the world. Few understood this great mystery of the Incarnation, and the prophets alone were found to have dived into the secrets thereof, to whom it was imparted by the special gift of Revelation to foresee and

write it. For they, as God's chosen friends, were permitted so to enter into the secret of heavenly counsel, as to understand that mankind had fallen into so great misery by the crime of the first prevarication, which could be no otherwise expiated than by the grace of our Mediator, by whose incarnation and passion man was to be redeemed. (1 Cor. 10.) This was what no vulgar capacities (which received all things in types and figures) could comprehend. It was much for them to receive any gift of earthly promises. But to the prophets nothing seemed great and to be rejoiced at, save that only which savoured of the delights of eternal beatitude. Whence it was that one of the chief prophets, transcending all terrene things, pointed out what he chiefly loved, saying: "What is there to me in Heaven, and besides thee what would I upon earth, God is the God of my heart, and my part for ever." (Ps. lxxii.) But this love of heavenly things, and hope of future things was not found in all men. Numbers were ignorant of the difference betwixt the shadow and the truth, till thou, O good Jesus, our true peace, didst descend from heaven, and enter into this earthly valley to enlighten mankind. But when we read that thou the Word art made flesh, (John i.) and that thou the Word art made flesh, (John v.) and that thou the creator of man has deigned to appear among men, that which had lain a long time hid began to be made manifest by thee; and that which was hard to be understood, was brought down to our capacities; and what seemed incredible, was made visible, and even as it were palpable by thy saving presence.

21. To conclude, some things thou didst humbly accomplish, even according to their literal sense, shewing that they were written of thee. Some things again thou didst not literally observe, but more profitably referred them to a mystical sense, teaching thereby that all the oracles of the prophets were not to be taken literally, which yet were always sound and entire, according to their spiritual sense and meaning. For, witness the evangelist, this passage of the scriptures concerning the Paschal Lamb was literally fulfilled in thee: "You shall not break a bone of him." (Exod. xii., John xix.) And this spiritually which saith: "And he shall be a lamb without spot, a male a year old." (Exod. xii. 12,) for a lamb without spot represents thee, who art innocent and without all spot. Thou dost therefore instruct the simple to believe by evident prophecies; and thou dost elevate more subtle spirits, by obscure passages, to search out high mysteries. This prophecy lies open to all capacities: "They digged my hands and my feet; they numbered all my bones." (Ps. xxi.) This other is more hidden: "I am a worm and not a man." (John xix.) This again is an open prophecy: "They shall look upon him whom they pierced." This hidden, "Upon one stone there be seven eyes." (Zach. iii.) These and many other testimonies are found, most truly foretold of thee, which the Jewish fallacies and craft can never destroy. For they endeavoured to bring in false testimonies which agreed not. Woe be to thee, O perfidious wretch, who chooses rather to perish than to believe. Consent to the word of truth, lest it be said to thee, as it was said to the Saduceans, who were carnally

blind in the law of the prophets, "You err, neither knowing the scriptures nor the power of God," for every prophecy hath reference to Christ, and is consummated in Christ.

22. How comes it, O Lord Jesus, whilst thou wast present in flesh, thou didst not only mind the salvation of the Jews alone, but even of those that should believe in thee, by the holy preaching of the apostles, whom thou didst specially select for this work ; who, though at first they were but simple and unlearned men, yet by thy daily conference with them, and in process of time by a more plentiful infusion of the Holy Ghost, as thou didst promise them, they were led into all truth, so as they were capable of the fulness of all the scriptures. And their preaching was so much more to be admired, and a more certain belief was to be given to them, by how much more certain it was, that of themselves they had not wrought so wonderful things unless thy powerful hand had strengthened them ; since it was indeed a very hard and truly divine work to have subdued all the world to the sacred laws of faith. O wisdom of God, who didst issue out of the mouth of the highest ! how great things hast thou performed for our salvation, to reduce us back again thither whence we were fallen. Thou first sent out the patriarchs and prophets to foretell thy coming ; and then thou didst depute the apostles and evangelists to teach that all was accomplished. O thy unspeakable mercy, O Lord, which is made manifest unto us, far above all that our thoughts could reach to. Thou didst carefully seek those that knew thee not ; thou didst not forsake those that abandoned thee ; thou

most mildly pardoned those that sinned against thee; and thou showest the way of salvation to those that strayed far from thee. If thou be so good and gracious to thine enemies, what wilt thou be to thy friends? Verily thou shalt be all in all, so that nothing may be wanting to those that feast and rejoice with thee in thy Father's kingdom. Amen.

#### THE TESTIMONIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. But now let us produce a few testimonies out of the New Testament; for all that I find written therein I constantly believe to be thy testimonies. And that, not as of old delivered in figures and dark speeches, but in plain and powerful words, they publish thee to be Christ the Son of God. And in the first place the angel Gabriel, who was sent to the Virgin Mary, testifieth this, saying: "Which shall be born of thee holy, shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i.) And the angel speaking unto the shepherds gives the same testimony: "Because this day a Saviour is born to thee who is Christ, Lord in the city of David." The most devout kings do also witness the same, who came from the east to Jerusalem, and thence were directed to Bethlehem to honour him with mysterious presents, whom they had foreseen in the star. (Matt. ii.) The same too doth that memorable, just and religious aged Simeon witness, who expected the consolation of Israel; for he having received an answer by the Holy Ghost, that he should not depart this life till he saw the anointed of the Lord, came in spirit into the temple, (Luke ii.) receiving there thy tender body into his

arms, whose majesty yet he interiorly was not ignorant of, he devoutly sung thanksgivings : “ Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace.” (Ibid.) Which canticle being ended, he said also to thy venerable mother : “ Behold this is set unto the ruin, and unto the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted ; and thine own soul shall a sword pierce, that out of many hearts cogitations may be revealed.” O the devout and sincere faith of this most blessed old man ! He adores thee being a little child, whom the Scribes and Pharisees contemned even working miracles. He confesses thee to be the true God ; while they term thee a seducer, and a possessed person. And therefore he is deemed worthy of praise and veneration, while they are deservedly reputed the sons of perdition. The venerable John the Baptist gives also testimony of thee, who was divinely sent into the world to that purpose : “ A man shall come after me, who was made before me, whose shoe-buckle I am not worthy to loose.” And he, seeing thee converse among men, and notwithstanding remain free from all spot of sin, saith : “ Behold the Lamb of God, behold who taketh away the sins of the world.” He was a bright and burning light ; but thou the true light, which enlightens all men coming into this world. He the crier, but thou the judge. He the humble servant, but thou the Lord of all. He the spouse’s friend, but thou the spouse of the Church. He is the Prophet of the most High ; thou the only begotten Son of God, co-eternal with God the Father. He went out before thee like the day star to prepare the way ; but



thou followed him as a bright sun fulfilling all justice. Who didst also send out thy apostles, as so many sun-beams into the whole world, to preach the light of faith to all nations for their salvation. But thou hast yet another testimony greater than John. For the Father witnesseth from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am pleased." Again the Holy Ghost, appearing in the shape of a dove, came down and remained upon thee. And thou thyself being present in flesh, didst more fully and amply declare to thy most faithful friend John, of how great power and majesty thou art, so that he, reputed the former knowledge he had of thee to be mere ignorance, in respect of the greatness of the revelation he then had of thee, said: "And I knew him not." O most excellent man for sanctity, fore-chosen to behold that most singular and high mystery of the Blessed Trinity; whose life and death, baptism and preaching, was a most true testimony of thy coming in flesh!

24. Let now the most blessed apostle Peter, thy fervent lover and devout confessor of thy truth, come and deliver his sense how we ought to believe in thee, all erroneous opinions being laid aside. Let him come, I say, and openly publish his sense: Thou, saith he, art Christ, the Son of God. O truly apostolical confession, which flesh and blood never taught, but was revealed to that Son by a dove from heaven. And thence for the constancy of his faith he merited to be styled both Peter (Petra) and a rock; because, abandoning all other things, he adhered to thee as to a firm rock. If one admires to see a rude fisherman become a Prince of the Apostles, let him no less



wonder to see Moses the leader of the people, and David the king, who were formerly poor shepherds. He, therefore, who raised David to the height of a prophet, and made of a shepherd a king, he also promoted St. Peter to the dignity of a prince, from the abject condition of a fisherman. Let St. Paul, also, the Master of the Gentiles, Doctor of the World, Vessel of Election, and Light of the Universal Church, come out to give testimony of thee: When, saith he, the fulness of the time came, God sent his Son, made of a woman, under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. This is that most glorious Paul to whom thou didst speak out of the clouds: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou dost persecute." This was he whom thou madest a preacher of a persecutor, and of a Pharisee an apostle; commanding that he should carry out thy name, which formerly he did persecute through all the world, not fearing to publish it to Gentiles, Kings, and the sons of Israel; who, courageously executing the office of his apostleship, and running through sundry parts of the world, he sounded the evangelical trumpet, and the sound of thy name was dilated to the very confines of the earth by his glorious mouth. For there is now no church in all the world which is not supported by his doctrine under the Catholic peace. He confounded the Jews, and powerfully convinced them by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, affirming that thou art Christ the Son of God. He converted the Gentiles, and showed that idols were nothing at all. He subdued the barbarous nations, confuted the philosophers, and

drew all jointly to the light of faith. This is that divine Paul, who being rapt up into the secrets of the third heaven, learnt the gospel which he preached, neither of man, nor by man, but by thy revelation, O Christ Jesus. And therefore he was able to preach it with more confidence, and to write it with more magnificence, as indeed he did. "It is a great mystery of piety," saith he, "that was manifested in flesh, justified in the spirit, appearing to the angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed by the world, assumed in glory."

25. Let Andrew also, Simon Peter's brother, that most fervent lover of the Cross, at first one of St. John's disciples, but after that a follower of thee, and a chosen apostle, speak to this truth; let him, I say, give testimony of thee, that we may hear and believe him. "We found," saith he, "the Messiah, who is called Christ." O simple and constant faith, which all Christians ought to follow! For he following thee by simple faith, forthwith disclosed the faith which he had drank from Thee, the fountain of truth, to his brother Simon, by the devout profession of his mouth. And he led him, that is to say Peter, to Jesus. For this is indeed to have found thee, when we are careful of our brother's salvation, and show him the way to life everlasting. The Jews did not so when they tempted thee, saying: If thou be Christ, tell us plainly: Woe be to you, Scribes and Pharisees, who neither gave credit to his words nor wonders. Andrew, the unlettered man, having but once heard Christ speak, presently followed and believed him. You, knowing both the law and prophets, yea, further, having heard truth

from Christ's own mouth, and seeing with all his signs and wonders, which none but he ever did, yet you believed him not. And therefore you are liable to a greater judgment; and the pious simplicity of the faithful shall judge you, together with those that said, there is no God, and they are but fools that serve him.

26. Let that beloved apostle, John, who lay upon thy breast at the last supper, O Lord Jesus, speak among the rest; "In the beginning," said he, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word." And a little after, "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt in us: and we saw his glory, the glory, as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is that disciple who gave testimony of these, and wrote these things, and we know his testimony is true. But O, most sweet John, what is the cause of this evangelical description? "And these things are written that you should believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in his name." This is John whom Peter often took for his companion, and resisted the princes and magistrates with an equal constancy. Who also, held not his peace, though he was beaten by them, but for thy blessed name, O Jesus, he endured contumelies and blows with joy. And then being sent by the apostles with Peter he went with all promptitude to Samaria, and prayed and obtained that the faithful might receive the Holy Ghost. This is the divine John the most clear beholder and reporter of the Holy Trinity; the pillar of the Primitive Church, the Governor and Apostle

of all Asia: who being driven into banishment for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, he there wrote the book of the Apocalypse all full of divine Revelations: and he makes good both in the beginning and in the end of the same, that his prophetic spirit is a testimony of Jesus. He intersperses most admirable testimonies of the Incarnation all over his epistles, which are inflamed with divine charity, saying: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in flesh, is of God: and every spirit that loseth Jesus, is not of God."

27. Let us also hear the testimony of Philip, who finding Nathaniel, said unto him: "we have found Jesus, the Son of Joseph of Nazareth, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets wrote." For so thou didst yet suffer thyself to be called and esteemed by many, before thou didst reveal thyself to the world. But truly thou art not the son of Joseph, but a son of the immaculate Virgin Mary, of whom thou wert conceived by the work of the Holy Ghost, and begotten without any spot of sin. Nathaniel, a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile, bears a higher testimony to this truth, and says; "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." If the testimony of a lawgiver be desired, behold Nicodemus, prince of the Jews, saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou comest from God, for none can do the signs which thou dost, unless God be with him." Consider now diligently, O ye Jews, and see what a cloud of witnesses Christ hath, whom yet you fear not to deny. If you wish for more witnesses, the thief's faith, and the centurion's confession confounds you both by their acknowledging Christ: who hang-

ing upon the cross ; and giving up the Ghost with a great cry, said : “ Truly this was the Son of God.” Your objection was therefore false, which you made against Christ, saying : “ thou givest testimony of thyself, thy testimony is not true.” For you see that Christ wants not witnesses neither in the old or new Testament, if you would admit them. But because you have no charity in you, neither doth the word of God remain in you, and therefore no authority is prevalent with you. But what have I to do with the Jews ? what hath the infidel common with the faithful ? truly no more than is between light and darkness. Yet while their error is confessed to be evident, our faith is more fortified in thee, O Lord Jesus. Their foolish interrogatory serves us for a *caveat*. But thy sweetest answer doth much more profit for our true instruction and doctrine. For thou sayest to them : “ I am the light of the world, who follows me walks not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” Willingly do I hear the prophets speaking of thee, but the word which issues from thine own mouth speaks much more sweetness to me. Grateful is the testimony of the prophets to me, but the testimony given by thyself is far more grateful : for if the testimony of man be admitted, thy testimony is yet greater, because thou art truth which deceives not : and wisdom which knows all, yet to strengthen our weakness thou didst add prophets too, having otherwise no need of them as to thyself. For as thou sayest to one : “ this voice came not for me, but for you, I rejoyce therefore, O most dearly sweet Jesus, in all that the prophets said : I exult with joy in all those things that the

apostles and evangelists delivered unto us : all whose faith was but one spirit, one sense, and all of them admirably accorded together : for the Holy Ghost in very deed replenished all their hearts, and made them capable of conceiving all mysteries past and to come. Which when I either read or hear I embrace with an entire and absolute belief, and I am thereby inflamed in thy love, though otherwise a poor and miserable sinner. The prophets' predictions, visions, and heavenly speeches are all for my use and service. The evangelical writings are my advantages, as also thy disciples corporeally seeing, hearing, and touching thee while they conversed with thee. They that were worthy to see thee saw for me. They that were to announce thy truths heard for me, and they that were to confirm me in faith touched for me.

28. In sequel to the former, the most glorious martyrs gave a most powerful testimony concerning thee. For they gave it not only by the confession of their mouths, but even by the effusion of their blood. Nor could either the violence of torments, or the sweetness of allurements, bias them from their faith. St. Stephen, the first martyr, gives this testimony : "Behold, I see the heavens open, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God's power." Blessed Laurence, in the midst of his torments, spoke these words : "O Lord Jesus Christ, God of God, have mercy on me thy servant, because being accused I denied not thy holy name : being questioned I confessed thee to be Lord." Blessed Vincensius, a Levite, and magnanimous martyr, though his body was thrown upon the ground, yet he failed not in courage, but cried



out with a vigorous voice, "This is the glory of a Christian name. I the servant of Christ, stand prepared for all things. St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. John, being beaten with leaded rods, torn with whips, and thrown upon the burning coals, gave a great testimony of faith, and convinced by his fervent answer, that love as strong as death, burnt up his heart, saying: "Nor can burning fire, nor scalding water extinguish the fire of charity which flames in my heart." O wonderful martyr! whose constancy touched Trajan, the emperor, with astonishment, saying: which of the Grecians did ever suffer such torments for his god? O in how great veneration ought he to be with us, who was never heard, O Lord Jesus, to have shrunk from invoking thy most sweet name? Who being demanded respecting it said: "I have this name printed in my heart, and thence it is that I can never cease from calling upon it." Which heart of his being afterwards pulled out of his body, and cut in the midst, was found to have JESUS CHRIST written in it, in letters of gold. O sweet Jesus, how amiable and delightful is thy name in the hearts of thy lovers? And what great need have I frequently to invoke that mellifluous name of thine, I who am amidst a multitude of sundry temptations? Vouchsafe therefore, O Lord Jesus, to engrave thy most delicious name as a perpetual memorial in my heart, and inflame it with so ardent zeal of charity, that neither joyful nor sorrowful things may be ever able to separate me from thy love.

29. The venerable confessors and doctors, as well by their doctrine as famous actions, afford thee many



laudable testimonies. For these are they who placed themselves as a wall for the church, and loudly cried out against all heretical impostures. Amongst these is that glorious priest Hierom, the famous doctor Ambrose, the most blessed prelate Augustine, the sweet Pope Gregory, venerable Bede, devout Bernard, and others similar; men of great name and fame: courageous in their works, eloquent in their words, Catholic in faith, rich in knowledge, edifying themselves and many more, leaving behind them a worthy memory of divine erudition to posterity. For in the first place, that glorious Father Hierom, when he received the holy communion before his death, said: Thou art he, who being God alone before time, yet was begotten of the Father, without beginning, by an eternal generation, which can never be found out: thou, I say, being made man, didst shut up thyself in the narrow dimensions of the sacred womb of a poor maid, that is, the glorious Virgin Mary. So that thou didst take man upon thee in the womb of a Virgin, who art neither God without man, nor man without God." Thou truly art the life by which all creatures live, and without which they die. Thou art a living, delightful, sweet, and amiable life. The sweetness of thy odour doth refresh the sick and infirm, and the taste of thee makes them healthful and strong. Ambrose, that melodious orator, said: "O the wonderful condescension of thy piety towards us! O the inestimable love of thy charity! To redeem a servant, thou deliveredst a Son." The most learned doctor, St. Augustine, said: "The Son of God, our Creator and Redeemer, who became the Son of man in the end, was before all

ages, of ages, that he who had created us by the power of his divinity to enjoy the beatitude of an everlasting life, he should redeem us by frailty of our humanity, to recover again the life which we had lost." This is Augustine, that high contemplator, whose heart was so wounded with the love of Christ, that he carried his words with him as so many sharp arrows. Who in the beginning of his conversion could not be satiated with the inestimable delight of considering the highness of the divine counsel in point of man's salvation. Whereupon being inflamed with an ardent desire of knowing the Deity which he sought above himself for the unchangeable truth, he burst out into this kind of exultation : O eternal truth ; and true charity, and dear eternity ! Thou art my God ; I sigh after thee day and night. The most excellent Pope St. Gregory saith : Our Lord Jesus Christ made man, being the mediator between God and man, came among men in simplicity to offer men an example of life : he came in justice that bad spirits might not be spared : in the fear of God, that pride might be subdued : innocent and flying evil, that uncleanness of life might be purged from his elect. The same again, " O how great is the mercy of our Maker. We are not worthy servants and we are called friends." " The only begotten Son of God," said Origen, " who was ineffably born of the Father only, before all ages, now towards the world's end, comes amongst men in a human body by the will of the Father, and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost." " God seeing," said Isidorus, " that the world would not be corrected by admonition, sent his Son to take flesh upon him, to appear to men.

and to cure sinners." Pope Leo : "The Son of God enters into this base world, descending from his heavenly mansion, and yet not departing from his Father's glory, and is born after a new manner by a new nativity." By a new manner ; because being invisible of his own nature, he becomes visible in ours. Being incomprehensible he would be comprehended : being before time, he would begin to be in time. "The Saviour of the world," said the Bishop Maximus, "took a time to be born of a mother, who had no time to be born of a father. The inhabitant of the Heavens came to the earth to call away the inhabitants of the earth to heaven. The Word is made flesh, not that God should be turned or evacuated into man, but that man might be glorified into God." Fulgentius the Bishop.—"Christ the Son of God, true God, of true God, and one God by nature with his Father, he always of himself feeds the angels, yet did not the Son of God take the nature of angels upon him. Yet that God might command his charity in us, his Son took our nature upon him" for us : that God only begotten, who is the bread of angels, took jointly upon him both the soul and body of man, that he might also become the bread of man. He took both of them true, both holy, both unspotted. He received our soul without iniquity : our flesh with mortality, that dying according to it he might subdue death. He received our soul just, that he might thereby restore justice to our souls.—Chrysostom. "Christ came to take our infirmities upon him, that he might confer his power upon us. To seek human, and work divine things : to receive injuries, and render dignities : to suffer wounds, and

return cures." He suffered such necessities, that by human actions he might be proved to be true man.—Bede. "The Word is made flesh, that is, God is made man, and dwelt in us, that by wearing a garment of our own flesh and blood, his conversation might be agreeable to us, his words might be fit to instruct us, his life, he living with us, to afford us life; in a word, that he might fight against our enemy, and by his death and resurrection, destroy our death."—St. Bernard: "The only begotten of God, the Son of justice, is erected like a large and excellently bright taper, to enlighten the obscure persons of this world, to the end that all that desire to be enlightened, may draw near and join themselves to him, that nothing may be interposed between them." Again, "I am of opinion, that the cause why the invisible God would be seen on earth, and converse with men, was, that he might first draw all the affections of carnal men who loved only carnally, to the wholesome love of his flesh, and so by degrees wind them to his spiritual love."

30. Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus do among the rest afford a famous testimony of thee, who adhered unto thee with a singular devotion, whilst thou wast conversant in flesh here below. This is that most devout Mary, the washer of thy feet, who made not choice of common water, but of the tears of her contrite heart to perform the work, and had her extended tresses of hair ready to wipe them, her lips to kiss them; and her hands and arms to anoint them. By which she turns all to piety, whatever she had formerly employed in worldly vanity. O the blessed contrition of this woman,

which is forthwith attended with the remission of all her sins. For she that came in anxiety and trouble, goes back in peace free from all disquiet. She was more just than the Pharisee, more faithful than Simon the leper, because he doubts, she believes : he surmises, she adores and loves. He makes a show of feigned justice, she truly shows humility every where. This is thy most dearly familiar friend, who after many good offices of humanity deserved to be made the first witness and messenger of thy resurrection, and her sister Martha too, busily employed in her frequent labours, gives thee a testimony of perfect faith ; I believe, said she, that thou art Christ the Son of God who came into this world. This is thy beloved hostess who so often entertained thee corporeally in her house with so much honour, and yet prepared thee a more grateful abode in the house of her heart, where rejoicing faith, hope, and charity spiritually lodged thee. So that a certain woman of the company emulating her perfect faith, cried out with a loud voice, saying : "Blessed be the womb which bore thee, and the breasts which gave thee suck." It is evident that this was a woman of great faith and devotion, who confessed the mystery of thy Incarnation with so much sincerity, while the Scribes and Pharisees blasphemed thee.

31. The sacred Virgins also, whose spouse and comforter thou pleased to be, gave testimony of thee. Blessed Agatha, a free-born Virgin, a person of eminent extraction, saith : "My heart is established and grounded in Christ." This is she who for thy name-sake went to prison with joy and jubilee. This is she who, after she was tortured and had her

breasts cut off, sought for no earthly remedy : but I have, said she, " my Saviour Jesus Christ who cures all things with a word." The devout Virgin Lucy, preparing a pleasing mansion for thee by her virginity, showed the great strength of her faith, saying, " I have sacrificed to the living God for the space of three years, but wanting now wherewithal, I will sacrifice myself to God a living host ;" and being thrown into the fire, she repressed the force of it, saying : " I have begged of my Lord Jesus Christ, that fire should have no power over me." The blessed Virgin Agnes, thy choice and beloved spouse, doth yield thee so evident a testimony, that all she said may seem to have been not a human but even a divine oracle. What this noble tender young girl pronounced of faith and chastity ; and of the love and beauty of her spouse outstrips her sex and age, " I love Christ," saith she, " into whose bed-chamber I have entered ; whose mother is a Virgin, whose Father knows no woman. For him alone I serve my faith, to him I commit myself with the whole devotion of my heart, whom the Angels serve, whose beauty the sun and moon admire." And she gloried, as indeed worthily she might, saying : " My Saviour Jesus Christ espoused me with his ring, and honoured me with a crown as his spouse." Cecilia, a most noble Virgin, bearing the words of the gospel about with her in her heart, and desiring to please thee alone, she gave her mind to no pleasure nor vanity, but being wholly addicted to fasting and to prayer, she sung in her heart : " Let my heart and body remain spotless that I may not be confounded." And being questioned about faith, she answered with



much constancy : “ We knowing his holy name are not able to deny it.” The like did the rest of the sacred Virgins, Catherine, Barbara, Ursula, and Christina, persisting constant in thy faith ; fervent in thy love, treading carnal allurements under foot, embracing angelical purity, they outrun their sex in this world, and gained eternal renown in Heaven.

32. The very elements which thou didst make, give testimony of thee. And fit it was that even unreasonable creatures too, should know their Creator, and that they should declare him by wonderful signs, whom they could not denounce by words. For all creatures were bound to render thee service, being their Creator. And therefore when they paid the tribute of some new and unaccustomed service, doubtlessly they shewed by effects that they knew thee to be their Lord and master. The heavens made that acknowledgment of thy being their Lord when they presently sent a star to point out thy nativity. The like did the earth, when it restored Lazarus, being four days dead, at the hearing of thy cry. As also when it was moved and quaked in the time of thy passion. The sea acknowledged the same, when it afforded a solid way to thy feet, and shewed Peter thy Apostle a passable way unto thee. The air acknowledged it, when upon thy command it instantly became calm. The sun also acknowledged it, since in the time of thy passion it withdrew its light, lest it might have seen him die, whom it knew to be the maker of its beauty. The rocks and stones seemed sensible of it, so at the same hour they split with compassion. The clouds acknowledged it because



they received thee ascending up into them. When all these elements then proclaim that their God and Lord is come in flesh, do not thou, O man, who art a reasonable creature, stand doubtful, or prove slow to confess the mystery of Christ's incarnation, which was chiefly done for thy salvation, being replenished with heavenly wonders, thoroughly confirmed by testimonies of Scripture, lest thou appearest less sensible than senseless creatures, and more stupid than mere brutes. As our Lord thunders out by the voice of Isaiah against the Jewish infidelity, "The ox knew his possessor, and the ass his master's stable, and Israel knew me not, my people understood not." But not to pass measure in this search, be infinite thanks and praise to thee O Lord Jesus; and in thy name let every knee bow of celestials, terrestrials, and infernals, and let every tongue confess that thou art in the glory of God the Father Amen.

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OF THE FERVENT DESIRE OF THE PROPHETS, AND A  
DEVOUT PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF JESUS.

"Behold the desired of all nations will come." Attend and give ear all you that are faithful and devout, what the books of the prophets deliver concerning Jesus: for it is but fitting that now in this holy time of Advent we make a special reflection on the prophecies of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. For therefore are the books of the holy Prophets touching Christ daily read to us, that the whole affections of our hearts may more and more be inflamed with

the love of the *Word Incarnate* upon the hearing of the predictions of our ancient predecessors. O with what an ardent desire did the holy patriarchs and prophets burn, on the holy future promise thereof! It were a monstrous shame for us, if we were less inflamed at his very presence in flesh, since their hearts so burnt at the only memory that the Word was to become flesh. Abraham, the father of all the faithful, did exult that he might see Christ, whom he foresaw in Spirit was to spring from his stock. And he rejoiced with no little joy, through the sure hope that he had conceived that Christ should be born. The like did many other of the Saints, often breathing after him, whom they foresaw in spirit, desiring that so great a mystery might the sooner be accomplished, which we see already accomplished in very deed. Which our Saviour manifestly shewed, when being present in flesh he said unto his Apostles: Many kings and prophets would have seen what you have seen, and saw it not.

2. He seems then to bear but a little love to Christ, who thinks not over and over again in his heart how divine a mystery this is, and how great a benefit is conferred upon man in this, that Christ would deign to be incarnated. Howbeit our pious Lord is accustomed willingly to bestow the grace of devotion on those that meditate upon him, who came into this world to bestow his blessings. To wit Christ is never without unction, nor doth the thoughts of Jesus pass without sweetness and dear delight. Nor ought we to doubt but that many plentiful and delicious matters of holy meditations occur to studious souls which are hid and removed from the slothful

and negligent. Because they are not worthy to understand Christ's mysteries, who do not seek them with humility and desire, whence he himself saith to his disciples : " It is given to you to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, but to the rest in parables." (Luke viii. 10.)

3. But the love of Jesus doth powerfully draw his lovers to reflect and relish the mellifluous words which do flow from his mouth, and to ponder on the divine works which he achieved in flesh ; sufficiently to consider which, all moments and times are not sufficient. For it is familiar with such persons to have recourse to their most dear friend and comforter Jesus in all their occasions and necessities. Because he is the fountain of all graces and virtues, who is able with one only word or beck to reform all disorders. They receive consolations from him by divers means, and they often merit marvellous illuminations of mind, who betake themselves to him with such devotion and humility. And by how much more intimately they convert themselves to him, they meet with more high excesses of mind by his heavenly visitations. Great endeavours therefore ought to be used in these holy times, and always some holy thing is to be had in mind of the law and prophets, of the ancient fathers, ardent desires, of the depth of heavenly mysteries, of the revelation of future things : but yet much more of the accomplishment of all the promises.

4. We ought also frequently and constantly to pray, that our affections may be inwardly drawn to Christ, and that the intelligence of spiritual things may be opened to us with the prophets.\* For so it

is that we may make progress in the knowledge of the Son of God, and still further increase in his virtues, who for our salvation deigned to become man. O my soul what excuse canst thou frame, if thou beest found negligent in the consideration of such multitudes of graces? What, I say, wilt thou be able to answer to Christ in the time to come, if thou art not grateful for so many benefits, wherewith thou wert blessed in preference to so many nations and tongues. For how many were they, who never knew Christ, or ever heard of him? how many also who contemned him and would not believe in him? Whereas to thee it was granted not only to hear and believe, but even to read and understand the things which were written and foretold of Christ. Be therefore grateful to God for the exhibition of so great benefits, and be studious in the consideration of the divine works. For whatever is written or foretold of Christ, is all replenished with spirit and truth, and is full of love and matter of sweet delight. There wants no excuse of exercising holy devotion, nor time of holy meditation.

5. Books also are open, and the sermons of saints are multiplied, and all things well ordered by our forefathers in point of performance of the divine service. How canst thou then say I have no ability for holy meditation, where so many things are prepared for the consolation of all the faithful? This winter time withal is very fit to exercise devotion in, and to communicate with our Lord. For though it be cold indeed, should therefore the fire of internal love be hindered or extinguished? Even the nights which are longer than ordinary, afford a

greater scope to pray and meditate : and the very sharpness of the winter air, the coldness of the winds and the bitterness of the weather, deprives us of the opportunity of roaming abroad. And even all things conspire together to say : let every one keep at home, and occupy himself with Jesus day and night. Let none stir out of the door of his tabernacle, for the time permits it not : but let him keep the sabbath of his soul, and let him prepare in his heart a most beautiful mansion for our Lord. For by how much our exterior senses are more collected and united, by so much the spirit within is more at liberty, and more powerful to contemplate divine mysteries. And now nothing seems to be wanting save the grace and virtue of the Holy Ghost, without which our life is fruitless, and man's diligence falls far short. Which if it be present, it speedily transports us to supernal things, and that suffices the lover, though he be otherwise ignorant and unlettered. Even to those that are learned too, the assistance of the spirit is necessary for a true understanding : for without the spirit, learning is void of effect, and all our prayers want fervour and unction.

6. Use therefore a greater measure of devotion in this holy time of Christ's coming, but especially from the day when the Church begins to sing *O Wisdom*. Then ought the heart and soul more affectionately to be raised up to Christ, for he it is whose coming our holy mother the Church desires. For this exclamation of the holy prophets insinuates their infinite great desires, as also the ardent love of any affectionate soul desiring Christ's coming ; saying, as it were in her devout prayers : O my most dearly be-

loved Jesus, the true and eternal wisdom of the Father, who didst wonderfully create us, come, and save us fallen souls by a way yet more wonderful according to thy admirable disposition. Come to visit us in the prison of the flesh: thou that art born without the contagion of the flesh: that thy elect may be freed, who are oppressed with the weight of their sins, and grievously afflicted with the horror of death. Come to enlighten the world's darkness, and purge the endarkened consciences, that the chains of their sins being broken, they may rejoice in thy mercy, and being raised by thy grace they may be solaced with the hope of eternal blessings by thee, O Jesus Christ, the true light of the soul, begotten of the Father from all eternity. Amen.

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### THIRD MEDITATION.

OF THE GOING OUT TO MEET, AND THE ENTERTAINMENT  
OF THE KING OF HEAVEN.

“Say, O ye daughters of Zion: behold thy mild King comes to thee.” God in old times speaking to the patriarchs and prophets, sent many witnesses before him of his incarnation; and now he denounceth the time of his coming to every faithful soul, almost in the same words. Denounce, quoth he, O ye daughters of Zion, you that are spiritual, and have the spirit of prophecy: or you that have read the prophets, and know the scriptures, denounce, I say, to the expecting soul, and to her who ardently desires



my coming, that she would open the eyes of her faith, and know that I am presently at hand. For such a soul I seek as desires to see me, and hath her thoughts set upon me. And I cry out to her again and again not to wax dull through heaviness of mind, but that she should watch, rise up and expect. Let her therefore pray and read my letters, which I sent her from heaven; let her be frequently attentive to them, and recreate and comfort herself in them, till I come; nor let her desist from praying and desiring, for I will shortly come without delay. I have indeed protracted time for a long space, I would not presently come, yet have I sent many and solemn messengers before me; by them I often signified and announced my coming, that I might stir up a greater desire, and magnify the joy thereof.

2. For as it is the custom that when a great king is to come any where, he is to be received with a great desire and longing, he therefore who earnestly desires me, shall have more joy in my presence, I being once come. But he that is addicted to the world, hath no power to desire me. Whilst he that contemns all wordly consolation, flies distractions, and recollects himself in his own heart, desiring eternal things, loathing things present; he, I say, earnestly desires to have the day of my visitation, and hour of the coming of the Holy of Holies, and the glorious presence of the King of Heaven advanced; saying, Come, O Lord, to visit me in peace, that with a right heart may I be joyful in thy presence. Come, O the desire of my heart, the light of mine eyes, and my peace. Thou art my hope, O expectation of Israel. In thee I have put my trust, let me not be confoun-



ded in my expectation, because I have lifted up my heart to thee with a fervent desire. To one that so desires me, and expects me from day to day, quickly will I appear, and manifest myself unto him ; for I am his Lord God who spoke to him in his prophets, and even to this hour I speak to all, yet more particularly to my faithful friends, but singularly to him who loves me in a special measure above the rest ; receives me more reverently, with a great desire to lead me into his heart. And now I am near at hand, saith our Lord : now my time is accomplished, I will no longer delay. I will fulfil the word I spoke : I will satisfy the promise I made. I will not permit the longing soul any more to languish. What she desired shall be granted ; what she wished shall be performed, because I, even I who said it, am here present.

3. Exult and rejoice, O faithful soul, because the king is come down to thee from heaven. This is indeed thy Lord God, thy Creator, thy Redeemer, so long expected, so ardently desired, and now at length ready to come. Fear not, O thou daughter of Zion, behold thy king comes. Behold the heaven out of which he departs : behold the world into which he makes his entry. Behold in his right hand a fiery law ; in his left riches and glory. Behold angels and archangels around him ; before him prophets, near him apostles, after him innumerable choirs of saints. Observe how great he is who enters, whom the dominations run out to meet, and all the powers of heaven attend. See how pious and mild he comes ; a poor and humble king in his humanity, who shall judge the universal world in equity. Blessed are the eyes which see these things, and consider the wonders of

the eternal king to their own edification. For they shall not in them discover the pomp of this world, but all humility and mildness in the coming of so great a king. Blessed be all those who have the eyes of a spiritual understanding; and in the light of faith behold the light of eternal truth.

4. This visible world indeed is seen with the eyes of flesh, even by infidels and pagans themselves. But this invisible Creator of the world is seen with the eyes of the mind by all the faithful of Christ, who love him with their whole souls: for, to believe in Christ, is to see him in mind; and ardently to love him is to lay hold on him and enjoy him. So did the old patriarchs and prophets see him, who long before his coming foretold and prophesied many things of him. Thence were the prophets of old called seers, because they foresaw what others knew not, and were careful to deliver them over to the unlearned, by word of mouth and writings, so we also, O my soul, see Christ too; we, I say, who after the Incarnation became Christians: because whatsoever we read and heard of him, we hold constantly in our hearts; and all which the prophets truly foretold, and the apostles powerfully confirmed, we confess, praise, and preach. Blessed be their eyes, therefore, who though they saw not Christ in flesh, yet they faithfully believe in him, devoutly venerate him, chastely love him, and ardently desire to receive him.

5. Behold our king comes to us from heaven, let us joyfully run out to meet him, and let us receive him with devout embraces. Let the heavens, that is, the high contemplators, rejoice; and let the earth, that is, the simple who follow the active life, exult

before the face of our Lord ; because he is come, he is come to save us, and to bestow himself upon us. Sing praise, ye mountains, and doctors shower down the sweetness of the word, and let the hills flow with milk and honey, for the spiritual consolation of us all. Let the trumpet sound in Zion, to call up all that sleep, and let the dispersed be gathered together in one, be the pusillanimous comforted, be the sorrowful solaced, and the infirm strengthened. Let all the world meet together, each one hastening from his home, because it is a great day in Israel, a day holy to our Lord ; behold the festival day of the king of glory is at hand. Rejoice, Jerusalem, and assemble yourselves, O all ye faithful, who love Jesus Christ, the joy of all that love him : because he comes not with noise, nor appears in visible state and pomp ; but you shall see him interiorly in the spirit of lenity and mildness. Let all the people, tribes and tongues, therefore rejoice and make preparation. But thou, O devout soul, thou daughter of Zion, whose whole aims are turned upon God alone, thou, I say, exult more than all the rest. For it is denounced to thee by the Prophet, from our Lord, to thee it is signified in a special manner, thou art friendly called by name, to hear and see how he that comes is qualified ; behold thy king comes to thee. Behold thy king ! not a terrene, not a temporal, not a mortal, but a celestial, an eternal an immortal king. Behold he comes, not to reign over the world, but with his blood to save it. Behold thy king ! the king of kings, and Lord of all lords. By him kings do reign in this world, and without him none are crowned in heaven. He is

the very king of heaven whom thou seest, and he comes not to take this earthly, but to give a heavenly kingdom. He will make him reign with himself, who chooseth to serve him, but he that is so unhappy as to refuse to obey him, shall be excluded from his kingdom. Behold thy king! whom thou desirest, whom thou lovest, in whom thou believest, and in whom thou hopest. He is king in general to all creatures; but he is thy king in particular by love, in quality of thine own spouse and familiar friend. Thine, I say, because he is more solicitous for thee; more vigilantly attentive to thee; more affectionately addicted, more closely united unto thee; so that thou mayest pronounce with truth, "My king and my God." To wit, he loved thee from all eternity, and now in time to redeem thee and save thee, he comes from his regal throne in heaven. In whom if thou wouldst glory, I know not how thou should be sad or despair.

6. For he it is that is the king and governor of all: and what he powerfully made, he doth most wisely govern; so that he is worthily called the King and Lord of all, but thine by the special grace of benefits bestowed upon thee. Heaven and earth depend upon him, and by his command every creature is governed. None can resist his power; all things are disposed by his wisdom; wisdom and power are with him, and he made all things, nor is there any end of his greatness. O how high and immense is he above all kings and princes, of whom the Prophet speaks in the Psalms: "But God, our King, before all ages wrought salvation in the midst of the earth." Behold he comes! he comes! not

in gold and silver, nor clad in purple and silk : not with trapped horses, or in shining arms : not in the sound of trumpets and harps, but in humility and poverty, in mildness and charity, that he may rather be loved than feared, that he may rather allure sinners to him, than drive them to him.

7. But for what came he? For his exceeding great charity wherewith he loved thee, that he might redeem him, whom he knew to be lost. He came for thy necessity and frailty, which is but too great. He came to free thee from sin, and to sanctify thee by the effusion of his precious blood. He came to enlighten thy ignorance, and to shew thee the way of truth. He came to assist thy infirmity, and to teach thee patience in adversity. He came to wean thee from the love of terrene things, and to raise thee up to the love of heavenly things. He came to preach virtue, and to put a period to vice. He came to infuse grace, and to rejoice our hearts with the delight of celestial consolations. He came to replenish thee with good things, and to deliver thee from all evil. He came to confer eternal beatitude upon thee, and to suffer temporal misery for thee. He came to bestow all he hath upon thee, and above all his other presents, to permit himself to be enjoyed by thee for ever. For, that thou mightest eternally rejoice, he came to undergo labour and sorrow. He came to be impoverished, that thou mightest be enriched. He came into banishment that thou mightest reign. The way came to the wandering ; the truth to the ignorant ; life to the dead ; light to the blind ; the physician to the sick ; the comforter to the comfortless ; the Redeemer to the sentenced ; the recon-

ciler to the seduced; a Saviour to the despairing man. Behold for what he came, and how much he bestowed upon thee by his wholesome coming.

8. He sent not an angel, an archangel, a patriarch or prophet; but he himself, the King of angels and Lord of prophets, came to deliver thee; because he is the Lord God who made thee. To wit, alas! all the kings and prophets who came before him, could free none out of the hands of death, or conduct them to eternal life. But this most potent and magnificent king for ever and ever will deliver his people: he will break the chains of hell, and conduct his elect into heaven. O that thou didst well understand, and diligently ponder of what and how great majesty that king of glory is, thou wouldst lift up the gates of thy heart most affectionately, and wouldst lead the King of eternal glory into thy heart; because it is but seemly to conduct such, and so great a King, with the greatest exultation possible, with high honour and solemn preparation; for if any king of the earth, or some one of his princes, had signified to thee, to-morrow I will be with you, provide a lodging for me, I have a resolution to make some stay with you; how solicitous, I pray, would you be, and what exclamations would you make? And now the King of heaven sends you down word by the prophets, saying: "Make ready for the coming of thy God, O Israel, because I will come, and take up my mansion in the midst of thy heart." Adorn therefore the bride-chamber of thy heart to receive this guest, who doth not only desire to come to thee, and to dwell in thee, and there to repose, as in his wedding-chamber. Happy is the



soul which is deemed worthy of the coming of this great guest, and who with her affectionate desires is able to receive him into the most secret closet of her heart, whom all the creatures are not, in respect of his worth, capable of; that she may take so much a more happy repose inwardly, by how much more absolutely she delights in nothing outwardly. O happy soul indeed, to whom the highest vouchsafes to come from heaven, our Lord, the King of kings, not to judge or terrify, but piously to visit and comfort her, as one well known to him, and pre-elected by him; for the mild king comes to visit and comfort all the mournful of Zion; to give peace to the inhabitants of the earth; to defer his strict judgment; to render down mercy before-hand; to pardon sinners; to receive penitents; to give grace to all; and finally to bestow life everlasting upon all that expect his salvation Amen.

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#### FOURTH MEDITATION.

IN THE NIGHT OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY OF SEEKING  
JESUS.

“Seek our Lord whilst he may be found: call upon him whilst he is near at hand.” Rise up all you that are Christ's faithful servants, run all together to this great solemnity of Christ's Nativity. For now the most sacred night is come, in which the Redeemer of the world, Jesus Christ, deigned to be born of the glorious Virgin Mary. Rise therefore



all of you, and watch. Prepare your hearts, and pray. Our Lord is come, "come ye and adore." Seek Jesus, and you shall find him; knock at the gate, and it shall be opened to you; enter into the place and you shall behold him. Our King is come, "our Christ is born to us." Come let us adore him, and let us fall down at his feet; for he it is who made us. Come angels and archangels, come and sing, exult with joy, and sing psalms. O you just rejoice in our Lord, sing a hymn to our God; publish his works among the Gentiles. Our Lord is with us, let us not fear. Our God is come in flesh, he is now with us in his humanity, who is never absent in his divinity. Come, great and small, old men and ancient fathers, young men and virgins, come sing a new song to our Lord, because this day he hath wrought wonders. Lift up your hearts and hands to heaven, and above all joy, give glory to his praise. Our Lord is with us, be not sad. O you elect of God, put on your garments of joy and gladness. Cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light; let us watch on this sacred night as on a bright day. Let us rejoice, and spring again with joy; let us sing and sound out hymns, with joy and jubilee to God our saviour. Let us present to him our vows, let our words testify to him our ready obedience. "Our Lord is with us," let us not depart, let us not relax, but sing to him with alacrity.

2. Now that the angels sing in heaven, and that the voice of praise resounds above, who should abide to sleep? who would indulge a slumber, when every soul should long to be in jubilation with Jesus?

Who would not this night rise with great courage and desire, when all things seem to abound with joy? And thou therefore, O daughter of Zion, rejoice and be glad; and thou, O Jerusalem, make jubilation, because true peace is come down from heaven this day to pacify and repair what is in heaven and what on earth. This day the true light shined upon the earth, that it might illuminate all men believing in him. This day great joy is made in Israel, because Christ is born in Bethlehem. This day the heavens are mellifluous all the world over, since from the mouths of the learned doctors most sweet words do flow, whereby the infirm are refreshed, the devout comforted, the ignorant instructed, the slothful excited, the faithful encouraged, and the incredulous confounded.

3. This day the angels exult, the archangels rejoice, and all the just are replenished with devotion and spiritual joy. This night is turned into day, and into a great brightness, because light shined in darkness to the righteous of heart: that is, our Lord, who is full of mercy and compassion. May this night be blessed for ever, and be numbered among the solemn festivals. Let them bless it, who are wont to bless the day, and let all the sons of light praise him, because in it Christ is born, the Son of God, the light of eternal light. Let not this night be passed over without praise and thanksgiving. Let it not be obscure and dark, but enlighten from above, and let numbers of lights be lighted in the universal Church. Let nothing be omitted which may contribute to the beauty thereof; but let its praises be continued even to the rising of the sun.

And when the day grows clear, let the sun of justice shine which is conceived in the hearts of all that love him; and let a new devotion be again stirred in the hearts of all that keep holy this solemnity. This day appears a day of sanctification; let all the faithful rejoice, because it was long since foretold us: "Be light made, and light was made." O truly blessed night, which was illustrated with the birth of true light, and adorned with angelical streams of brightness, by whose songs and praises it is rendered glorious to all the faithful of the universal world. O truly most blessed night, brighter than all the nights of all ages, which was made happy by knowing the time and hour, when the Son of God, endowed with our frail body, issued out of the Virgin's womb. O sacred and undefiled Nativity, which a virginal fecundity, outstepping the bounds of nature, which a virginal purity adorned, and the highest made choice of, that mortal man might be saved! O blessed and joyful nativity, which changed the curse of our first parents into heavenly benedictions, and their sorrows into eternal joy. This night is deservedly venerable and amiable to all men, wherein Christ deigned to be born to deliver all men.

4. Blessed be therefore the Holy Trinity, by whose goodness and counsel man's dignity was repaired, and the devil's craft defeated. I bless thee, O God the Father, who sent thine only beloved Son into the world for our redemption. I bless thee, O thou only Son of God, Christ Jesus, who assumed our nature to redeem mankind. I bless thee, O Holy Comforting Spirit, who gloriously and wonderfully accomplished all the mysteries of our re-

demption from the beginning even to the end. Be infinite praise and glory given unto thee. Thine be honour and power, O Supreme and Eternal Trinity, by whose providence and ordinance this joyful and solemn festivity was bestowed upon us. Amen.

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### FIFTH MEDITATION.

#### A DEVOUT VISIT TO THE NEW-BORN CHILD JESUS.

“Have you not seen him whom my heart loveth?” I speak to you, O holy angels, tell me what you know of my Jesus. Where is the little one which is born to us? Point him out to me whom my heart loveth. Or, if you will not do me that good office, do it at least by their mediation, whom you have judged worthy. I speak to you, O shepherds, tell me what you know of my Jesus. Where is the little one who is born to us? What announced the angel to you? “I announce to you,” quoth he, “a great joy, because this day a Saviour is born to you, who is Christ our Lord, in the city of David:” And what sign did he give you? “You shall find,” said he, “the Infant wrapped up in swaddling cloths, and laid in a manger.” And what sung the holy angels? They sung “Gloria in excelsis Deo.” And then what did you? Presently “with great speed and joy we ran to Bethlehem, and we found Jesus lying in the manger.” Ah! what is this I hear? How sweet and delightful is that which I

understand! I care no more now, I will run and see this child before I die. But stay a while, I pray, and I will go with you, and we will all of us take up one residence. And, O all ye angels of God, concur ye all in this, to lead me the straight way to the cradle of Christ.

2. O Joseph and Mary, O open, open the door of my beloved, that so being entered into his tabernacle, I may adore his sacred footsteps. All the kings of the earth had a longing desire to see the face of Solomon, and to hear his wisdom. And yet lo, more than Solomon is here! Permit me therefore to enter in, that I may kiss the footstool of his feet again and again. For this is he whom the prophets foretold: the angels announced; and the lively and devout shepherds visited. This is he whom I seek, whom I love, whom I desire to behold.

3. What art thou afraid of my soul? Cry out aloud, ask, knock, cease not till the gate be opened, enter into the place of that admirable tabernacle, even till thou come to the house of God. Approach with confidence, and put thyself cordially into the company of the new-born infant: for he will not repulse thee, nor drive thee away, but admit thee with silence and shew thee his grace. Fear not in the presence of the weeping babe in the stable; he weeps not for the wants he suffers, but for thy sins. For he comes to seek thee, not to lose thee. He comes to save, not to judge thee. He comes to loose thy shackles, not to bind thee. He comes to suffer miseries, not to inflict them. His aim is to free thee from bondage, not to imprison thee.

4. Why dost thou tremble at the aspect of a poor

child? Oh! he is God, say you, and in his hand is power and principality. It is true indeed, but he comes not now to judge, but to pardon sin. He publisheth mercy, suspendeth revenge. He offers grace, defers wrath. He shews love, excludes fear. He covets rather to be loved than feared. Say then, thou art welcome this day, O my Saviour, for thou art my Redeemer, O my Lord God. O much desired and amiable Child, show me thy mercy who am not yet capable to behold thy glory. Lend me the aid of thy right hand, who am not able to endure the rigour of thy justice. Even for thy endless mercy's sake, blot out my iniquity. I am sick and full of sores, O cure my soul. I am blind and naked, enlighten my darknesses, and adorn me with true virtues. I am withered away and lame, water my face with tears, and direct all my steps in thy paths. My heart saith to thee, that my face seeks thee out: I desire, O Lord Jesus, to see thy face; and devoutly to visit thee with the angels and the shepherds: for thou art the salvation of my countenance and my God, who ought to be loved by me incomparably, and above all other things.

5. None is fairer than thou, none more amiable, none more noble, none more holy. Thou art wiser than all the wise; richer than all, greater than all. Thine are the heavens, and thine the earth; the sea and all contained therein. The day is thine, and thine the night; summer and winter thou framedst; and orderest all things in their certain and set times: thou, I say, who would be born in the obscurity of the night, and in the rigour of winter. O the unspeakable love of God, and of my Lord and Master



Jesus Christ, weeping in the cradle, whom all the angels of heaven do praise and adore! What measure of thankfulness am I obliged to render to my most dear Lord, my Saviour and Redeemer, who was born for my salvation, and refused not, like a desolate poor man, to take up his lodging among beasts in a stable. Truly I have nothing of worth to present, yet must I not fail freely to offer thee a good will, as a testimony of my love and gratitude. And what more? shall I chuse to sing with the holy angels? or shall I moan out of compassion, by reflection of the weeping Child's tears. Both best please me; both parts I must perform, and so as well weep with Jesus, as with the angels sing praises to Jesus. From this moment my resolution is to perform all this to God's glory, and to humble myself before the eyes of his Majesty; who humbled himself even to the form of a little weeping infant.

A MEDITATION AT THE VENERABLE MANGER OF CHRIST.

O how reverend this place is, truly this is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven; enter, go in my soul, this is the little poor palace of a king, beg here for a lodging, take up thy residence, stay with Jesus and Mary, and solemnise this day's feast with them. Inquire for no other inn, but resolve humbly to stand or sit here, this day, near to the cradle. It is good for thee to be here, yea much better than to dwell under the gilded roofs of kings. The inhabiting this mean cottage, and the society of the three inhabitants, should yield thy heart a large portion of content. For although



these poor pavements, if their vileness be looked upon, do but little please, yet are their inmates wonderfully noble, if we contemplate their patience and virtue. Here therefore shalt thou this day dwell, here shalt thou abide, here shalt thou persevere.

2. But let us enter further, and more diligently contemplate the structure of this place. Inquire and carefully observe, where that venerable stable is situated, which lodges the world's Creator, lodging God a child, a heavenly treasure, the price of our Redemption, the joy of men and angels. Behold how God-man being born, lowly lies wrapped up in swaddling cloths, and keeps silence. How he lives most poorly and obscurely in this strange place, who together with his heavenly Father bestows all things from above. Embrace this noble stable with the arms of fervent love, and bestow frequent kisses upon it; then cast thyself humbly down at the feet of Jesus. Adore God here! here devoutly moan. Here watch, here pray, here read, here sing psalms, here exult O my soul. If you suffer any sorrow or grievance declare it to this child: disclose the desires of your heart to him, and acquaint him with all that concerns you. This sweet and lovely babe will teach the mild his ways, and will admit the prayers of the humble. He can cure the infirm, heal the contrite of heart, and bind their wounds: he can pardon those that mourn, and free them from all passions. Present thy heart to this babe, and beseech him to write his most sweet name therein. Bestow on him all that thou hast; and be wholly his, from this present moment for all eternity. His eternal and immense

love will effect this happy work, that thou mayest relinquish thyself, and love Jesus above all things.

3. Behold now, O my soul, and consider what abundance of riches and glory are here to be had. Regard not transitory treasures, nor worldly contentment, but look upon the wisdom of God incarnated, the child-bearing virgin, Joseph serving, and the choirs of angels assisting. "For truly our Lord is in this place." And my advice is, that you depart not hence, for where, I pray, can you find, what here you have already found? if you search all the world over, you shall never meet with so blessed a company, so holy a convent, so unanimous a congregation. The most holy in heaven are here assembled together; though by worldlings they are neglected, and set at nought. For in the whole world such wonders are not wrought, nor such rare novelties seen, nor so delightful joys heard of, as are in this lowly cottage, where Joseph, Mary, and the child Jesus laid in the manger, kept their residence. For here God and man, mother and Virgin, the old of years and a child are joined together.

4. Consider what this so great condescension, piety, love, humility, poverty, sweetness, grace, and excess of mercy would say. Turn over all the ancient monuments which prophesy of Christ, and observe how this day all the testimonies of the scriptures and the devout desires of the holy Prophets are fulfilled. Mark also the pious obsequiousness of the most blessed virgin mother: how infinitely she exults in mind with her noble child: note withal in what a sublime contemplation she is, to see the Son of God born of herself, and placed before her in the manger.

In this manner turn over and consider all, as though thou wert personally present at every one of them in particular. For we ought not to have less affection and devotion to these things though actually past, than if we did behold them done before us at this present moment. Lay up therefore in the closet of thy heart this holy remembrance, renewed every year. Let us not only call to mind Jesus born and laid in the manger, once every year, but let it frequently come in amongst all your exercises. Great wisdom, great purity and patience may be learnt of this blessed babe, which may suffice to edify the whole course of thy life. Because every action of Christ, is our instruction; and every sufferance of his, is our consolation, for he is made salvation, and redemption to thee and all the people. He teacheth thee more forcibly by his example than by his word, and persuades more efficaciously by his own works, than by the actions of others.

5. Let therefore the sacred nativity of Christ be always new to thee, nor permit so great a feast ever to pass by without an attentive consideration. And although the exterior veneration pass with time, yet let not the diligent consideration of it depart from thy heart. Be not therefore, my poor and miserable soul, ungrateful to God for this grace; thou who wert so diligently sought out, so mercifully drawn, so sweetly called, so mildly visited, so plentifully replenished with joy. It were a crime for thee to be sad, when life is born, and when there is rejoicing every where. "This day the Jesus was born to thee; this day a son was given to thee," that with him being a little one, thou mightest also become a little one; with a

poor one poor; humble with one humble; patient with one patient; mild with one so heavenly mild. Bow down therefore to him humbly, submit thyself to him willingly, that so thou mayest be exalted with him eternally, (that is, Christ the Son of God,) who assembled together the little ones, came down from the celestial seats above.

6. Gather now in this small space of time, what may be useful for thee all the course of thy life. How knowest thou, but this may be thy last feast in this world? And I would to God thou wouldst now celebrate this so devoutly, that thou mightest repose a great confidence in Jesus, that in the end of time thou mightest merit to go with him to the eternal feast. No doubt but a strict account will be exacted of thee, how perfectly thou art conformed to him in thy life. Whilst thou hast yet time then, and mean to advance thyself, have a care not to suffer him to pass by without advantage to thee, but endeavour to contract so absolute a league of friendship with him that thou mayest be numbered amongst his choice friends. If Christ were so good and gracious as to perform these things for thy salvation, be not thou so far wanting to thyself, as not to take them diligently into thy consideration. Christ is silent in word, but his works speak. His tongue keeps silence, but his tender limbs make clear expressions; so doth also his humility; so doth his extreme great want. The Virgin Mary too keeps silence, but the elements do not so. Jesus lies hid in the manger, but he is published by the angel. He appears vile and abject in his clothes, but he is declared precious in his signs. Herod is troubled at the news, but the shep-

herds run to find him. The Scribes and Pharisees disdain him, but the three blessed kings adore him.

7. Observe in him therefore not only great and sublime things, but small and abject things withal; for in both natures he appears a great Lord and exceeding praise-worthy: being high above all the angels, and the most humble amongst all men. Human things are joined with divine, high things with low, precious with vile, little with such as are magnificent, and the faithful ought to venerate them altogether with due honour. Let not therefore the thing clothes scandalize thee, which preach the Son of God's humility. Neither be thou troubled at the poor manger which the King of kings and Lord of angels made choice of for his palace. Consider not what is glittering to the eyes of flesh, but how great a mystery of man's salvation is here performed. Look upon Jesus and Mary, the Lord and Queen of the universe, who have no cares common with those of worldly persons. Here are no stately palaces, but celestial solaces. The sound of the trumpet and harp are not here heard, but the melodious voices of the heavenly choirs. I wish you did feel in spirit, that you were present to all these, and that elsewhere there is no living. God's word is now near to your mouth, provided only you seek him with a right heart; for now he is found in his mother's lap, who was in the bosom of his father from all eternity. The great God is now become so near to thee, that thou mayest embrace him as a little child, bear him in your arms too as a tender babe, because the Word is made flesh, and dwells in us. Behold he whom the world is not capable of containing, lies as a poor

creature in the stable. And he that bears the globe, in virtue of his word, is borne by his mother. He whom the cherubims and seraphims do praise, is fed with a little milk! which of all these things are not equally admirable and amiable?

8. What canst thou desire more? how could he either be more near to, or more like thee? Behold thy bones and thy flesh. Thy God is become thy brother. Who ever saw or heard the like wonder? Woe be to thee if thou ever dost depart from him. And happy art thou, if thou hast recourse to him with thy whole heart. Approach the throne of his grace with confidence: for though he be poor in worldly riches, yet are all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God hid in him. Prepare therefore clean lips to kiss him: wash thine eyes with tears to behold him. Purify thy hands to touch him: spread out thy hands to embrace him: and humbly bow thy knees to adore him. O that thou hadst now a neat coffer, all beautifully enriched with gold and diamonds, that therein thou mightest preserve and keep God, a new-born child. But there is no coffer so fit and worthy to receive God a child, as thy heart purified from all malice. For he requires no outward ornament, but rather that which is intimated mystically thereby, and this kind of ornament is very dear and grateful to him.

9. But how can you prepare yourself worthily to receive him? To fly from him is no ways expedient: and to approach him with an unclean heart is very indecent. But how shalt thou be purified, being engaged in so many vices? Be not too apprehensive, nor despair upon the sense of your wounds, let it



displease thee that thou art such as thou art. Wash out the stains of thy crimes with tears. Purge the guilt of thy conscience with inward contrition, and beg of him the oil of mercy, the gift of a plenary indulgence, and the restoring of new grace, and so though thou be very much spotted, yet shall not thy case be desperate. This child knows the art of purifying unclean things, and of whiting black; he can calm what is stormy; sweeten what is sour; lighten what is burthensome; extirpate all vices; and restore the joy and peace of the heart. Such he is, that he cannot be infected. By his touch the diseased are healed, and the infirm become strong. Now therefore prepare him a clean heart, wherein thou mayest lodge Jesus the Son of God.

OF THE JOYS OF THIS DAY AND A DEVOUT ENTERTAINMENT OF JESUS.

Rejoicing, I will rejoice in our Lord, and I will exult in God, my Jesus. O most sweet Jesus, and most loving child, my joy and my crown; my soul longs to sing, and exult in thee for joy. Permit me to pass one happy day with thee, and to spend this holiday in spiritual joy. For though the day be short, and the night of thy nativity quickly slides away, yet is there a large field to exercise devotion in; and there is, as it were, upon the altar a burning fire which consumes not. I wish therefore that this day were longer, and I upon it more devout than ordinary, that fervour might not slip away with the time, but might rather increase by diligent meditation. O day of joy, day of our eternal king, leave



me not so soon, but prove a cause of endless joy to me. O when shall that day arrive, to which no night shall succeed, a day subject to no vicissitude of time, but continually shines and is continually day. Where God is seen face to face. Where Jesus is perfectly loved and praised. Where our thoughts are never distracted from him, nor is the affection of our heart stained, but he is all in all. For that eternal day, this temporal day is worshipped; and that I might live there with Jesus for ever, he pleased to become a mortal man amongst us.

2. O Jesus, who art most worthy to be loved and worshipped. O most illustrious child, whom we ought dearly to embrace, worthily to adore, and publish to the world for ever. Thou art my only beloved, and my singular delight, before all and and above all other things: to whom I owe myself wholly, and all that I can do or desire, comes far short of what I desire to pay. For thy excellence surpasses all my endeavours. And whatsoever I am capable of, or can bestow, is almost nothing, yea less than nothing. I know, and faithfully believe, that thou camest into this place for my sake, and for my sake wert here lodged in this poor and abject manner. For thou didst all these things for my eternal salvation, and for thine own boundless charity, which is most dearly commended unto me.

3. O how much am I bound to love thee; how much am I obliged to praise and bless thee with thy angels, archangels, saints, and all men of good will; because thou wert incarnated, and made man for love of me. It were strange that ever my thoughts could depart from thee, and apply themselves to any other

thing, having once taken a taste of thy sweetness. For in very deed thou art a hidden manna, containing in itself all manner of delights, and surpassing all the grovelling pleasures of the world which are not with thee. Thou art a paradise of pleasure, a garden of delights. Thou art the fountain of wisdom, the sun of justice, the light of the world, the joy of heaven, the peace of heart, the solace of the soul; thou art our hope in tribulation, our refuge in temptation, our help in all our necessities. Thy presence brings joy to my heart; thy absence doth many a time fill it with sorrow, and this is an effect of love which will not have the beloved soul to take repose out of thee; but compels it still either to rejoice in thee, or delightfully to moan for thee. For what but love drew me hither; and what but love too brought thee down from heaven, and inclined thee to me? O love! O love! how sweet, and how strong is this love! Hence an unspeakable outcry and vehement fervour is begotten in my heart, which neither doth relish nor approve anything but the eternal love of Jesus. This makes us contemn the world, and repute all as nothing. This makes us relinquish all we have, and live under the yoke of obedience. This makes us refuse the pleasures of the flesh, and ardently desire the labours and pains of penitential life. This causeth us to fly the tumultuous noise of the world, and to give ourselves over to God's service in silence. This finally makes us die to the world, and live wholly to God.

4. And now then, what good office shall I afford thee, O beloved child, my Lord, my God, who art become a babe for my sake? Canst thou have any

want of my service, thou who hast heaven and earth at thy command? But however thou hast no need of my service, I have need of thy assistance, and I am bound to serve thee to the utmost of my ability, since grace and virtue are continually increased by thy help, and all my happiness depends upon thee. I would I were able to execute anything acceptable to thee, for that is what I most earnestly desire. And though it were not in my power to serve thee here in thy humanity, yet I can spiritually perform all things, by the affection of my heart, and by the help and endeavours of a good will. For I can accomplish many good works of piety, by serving my brethren for thy name sake, and such things thou reputest as done to thyself.

5. And truly my desire is to excite devotion in me towards thy sacred infancy, by words proceeding from love; at least I will not depart from hence, but will sit down here by thee, and every now and then will contemplate that amiable face of thine, that I may thereby the more easily forget mine own misery. I will here meditate on thy commandments, and exercise myself in thy wonders. Here I will disengage myself from worldly cares, and associate myself to heavenly delights. Here I will reflect on the days of old and keep the years of eternity in my memory. Here I will consider the last things, and pass over the years of my life in sighs and groans. Here I will appease thy wrathful countenance with my prayers, and sue to my judge for mercy.

Here will I call to mind thy wonderful works, and thine innumerable benefits bestowed upon mankind. Here will I find mine own heart; and here I will

wholly leave myself. For it will be much better in the hands of Jesus, than in mine own ; because there it will enjoy peace while here it meets with nothing but disquiet, here will I sleep, here will I repose, and here my sleep will be sweet and quiet. Here I will rise at midnight to confess unto thee, and earnestly beg the pardon of my offences. Early in the morning I will rise to thee, and I will sing to thy holy name all day long. If I go out, I will not fail quickly to return again ; or if I should chance to linger, I will humbly demand and obtain pardon. I will again and again sue to thee and never cease to give thee thanks, I will rise full of admiration, praise thy mellifluous name, which is blessed for ever and ever. I will after that sit down in my poverty, acknowledging mine own indignity and insufficiency to make any pretensions to those ineffable blessings, sweeter than all delights the world can afford. This done I will reverently adore thee, and present thee with all thine own blessings, willing and desiring that all thy works may praise thee, though even they too cannot worthily speak thy praises. And therefore I earnestly beg that thou thyself wouldst praise thyself ; because otherwise thou canst never be worthily praised to the full. O my soul, do now praise our Lord ; O Zion, praise thy God, praise Jesus thy Saviour. And though thou canst not perfectly praise him, yet cease not to perform in some sort according to thy poor ability.

6. Good Jesus, dear and beloved Child, I will praise thee in my lifetime as long as I shall be able to draw breath. I will sing psalms to my God ; for thou hast invited me to thy most sacred cradle, wherein thou hast deigned to lie for me a most

wretched creature. Who will be able to draw me from hence? None, none but my Lord Jesus, because thou art my dearly beloved, from whom I will not be separated for all eternity. Here therefore will I remain in the service of my Lord, and of thy mother, the holy Mary, and St. Joseph, thy reputed father.

7. Again, when the shepherds come, I will open the door and receive them with joy, and conduct them into this eternal King's presence. For to them it was that the angel announced this mystery, and led them to visit him; they were carried thither by devotion, and the desire of publishing the divine praises led them back again.

8. Nay, more, when the kings shall come from the east, I will run out with alacrity to meet those noble guests; and after due salutation and respects rendered, I will invite them to enter into this court to see the King of kings, whose wonderful sign shines in the heavens. When they enter I will enter too; when they adore I will adore, and when they offer, I will offer myself up entirely; yes, whatever I can procure, I will freely offer in holocaust to our Lord; and when they return home to their own countries, I will stay still in the court, and serve the King, my master, and his blessed mother, the perpetually glorious Virgin Mary. None shall be able to call me back from this court; no authority, no presents, no promises shall be of force to remove me from hence. Am I to make my will and testament? Here I will conclude an eternal league; here will I live and die. Please, I beseech thee, blessed Mary, my dear mistress, to admit me into thy Son my master's service and thine, and that I may execute

the same with all devotion and reverence. For I had far rather stay here, and beg with you, than lord it and regale it with the kings and princes of this world. Yea, though it were requisite to go abroad begging, I will presently go out, and beg enough for us all. And if none will bestow anything on us, I will humbly beseech the holy angels, and they will not fail to send us down enough and enough from heaven ; for in lieu of bread they will shower down heavenly manna. O Jesus, the true manna of our hearts, which is full of all kinds of delights, thou art our food, and our consolation. Here the fervour of devotion speaks, and whatever is dressed in this place, hath an excellent relish to the lover. I beseech thee also, venerable father Joseph, (who art so called, as well by reason of the dignity of thy ministry, as also to conceal the holy secret) to vouchsafe to admit me to be thy assistant. Order something to be brought to comfort the mother and her child, and I will be ready to comply with that duty.

9. Ah ! had I known when you came first hither, I would have attended you then. O God, that I had been so near, as to have heard the holy angels sing, and that this great joy might have been related to me. Good Jesus, how gladly and speedily would I have sprung to Bethlehem, and, if possible, have out-run the shepherds, that so I might have had the happiness to have seen my new-born master the very first of all. And had they returned to their flock again, I would have staid with God, a Child. I would rather have abandoned all the sheep, than have forsaken my Jesus ; yea, or even to have sold the whole flock, that I might have fed my Lord and



Master and his family. But it is not granted to all, to see the word of God incarnated, and so innocently laid in the manger. But as now, it is preached to all men, and proclaimed to the whole world; so that if any will believe, and desire to be saved, and will come to this Child with an entire and clean heart, he shall obtain the remission of all his sins at his holy hands, and shall after this mortal life, by the assistance of his grace, enjoy life everlasting.

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### MEDITATION.

OF THE DESIRE OF SEEING AND CONTEMPLATING JESUS.

“Shew me thy face: let thy voice sound in my ears; for thy voice is sweet and thy face comely.” These are the words of the loving soul to the most sweet Christ Jesus. But I beseech thee, O blessed babe, to grant that I also may pronounce these words in the desire of my soul. For when can I possibly be satiated with thinking and speaking of thee, since thou art the salvation of my countenance, and my God? Let me therefore see thy face and my soul shall be saved. As often as I am sad, look upon me with mercy, and my soul shall be comforted. “Thou art my hope from my youth, and unto ancient age and old years, O Lord, forsake me not.” O how amiable and sweet thou art become to men, for whom thou wert so gracious as to be made a little child. For with that love thou drawest me to thee, and strongly engagest me in thy love.

2. O most sweet, and most loving Child Jesus, please this day to take up thy abode with me in some small proportion. My soul loves thee because thou hast first loved me. Yes it hath pleased thee to descend from thy inaccessible and celestial abode into this worldly prison to visit and comfort me, moved only by thy singular great charity and incomparable sweetness shewed to me. O what a singular benefit thou hast done me in coming at this present: how wisely and sweetly hast thou performed the work by appearing in so gracious a manner. Thou hast put on human nature, taking upon thee the shape of a most beautiful Child; thou (who remainest always in thy divinity pure and simple, without all form and figure) dost outstrip all understanding. But I, being a poor silly creature, could frame no conception of such a substance which exceeded all form and shape, and therefore to condescend to my weak capacity, thou hast taken my nature upon thee, laying before mine eyes the shape of man, which is well known to me; that so by the sameness of nature, thou mightest make a great affection appear: and by the visible aspect of a man, thou mightest lead me by the hand, as it were, to the invisible substance of thy Deity.

3. O most sweet wisdom of God incarnated! how sweetly and wisely thou dost allure me by thy amiable infancy. Now turn, dear Jesus, thy face unto me, and do not reprove me from among thy children, but afford me a joyful countenance, that by the sight thereof my heart may be rejoiced, and from thence blessed with a new joy. Happy that hour, wherein thou beholdest me with thy pious eyes, and affordest me the grace I so greedily covet: for this

is an argument of thy clemency. This gives me confidence and comfort. This invites me also to draw near, to kiss thy feet, thy hands, and blessed mouth, O sacred feet, most worthy of all dear embraces : O the tender feet of my Lord Jesus Christ, folded within the narrow straits of a manger, which must hereafter walk for me, and be wearied many a time. Alas ! you endure no little cold, while you want perhaps clothes to cover, and fire to warm you. These are the tender and beloved feet of my Lord and Saviour, which must in time be pierced with sharp nails. Then you will be all in a gore of blood, who now patiently suffer the nipping frost. These are the mightiest feet that ever were to bear abroad the joyful tidings of peace ; prepared to perform a sharp rough journey ; allotted to point out the way of eternal salvation to the world. These are the feet of mercy and justice, at which the Æthiopians shall fall down, the devils shall fly, and kings and princes shall adore. Then shall the penitent sinner approach, and devoutly kissing them, they shall obtain grace and pardon.

4. O dear Child, permit me not only to kiss, bless, and praise thy feet, but thy hands and thy head too, and the other parts of thy blessed body. O the most tender hands, so delicately made, that there is not anything either superfluous or deficient. These are thy hands, O Lord, which made and framed me ; and now come to repair me. These will assist me to work faithfully, and strengthen me with a manly force against many temptations. These will support me in good that I fall not, and raise me from evil, that I despair not. These will impart benedictions

to little ones, and cure a number of infirm persons. These will fight against the devil, and bring all his power to nothing. These will some years hence be nailed to the cross, and great streams of blood will spring from them. These being extended on the cross, will petition for me, and their wounds shall obtain pardon for my sins. These will open the gates of paradise, destroy those of hell, and deliver the prisoners detained therein. These, at the day of doom, shall appear to all men with their scars, and shall evidently speak what great things God both did and suffered for them. Let that left hand sustain my head; and that right hand embrace me; O if I can but obtain this so great a blessing, how happy shall I be!

5. But now after this, I will take more confidence, and even dare to kiss thy mouth, and print my lips upon thy sacred lips, being emboldened by charity. For though the highness of thy divinity deters me, yet doth the likeness of thy humanity, and the delicious charm of thy form in thy infancy, wonderfully excites me. O the sacred mouth of my Lord, replenished with wisdom and grace! Thou wilt teach me the ways of life, thou wilt fill me with joy and gladness. Thou wilt comfort me with good words indeed; for if the sermon of a learned man be often grateful to us, how much more agreeable must the gracious words which flow from thy mouth needs be? O the sweet mouth of my Lord and Master! how beautiful are thy lips! how white are thy teeth! how sweetly will thy words flow from thee. Yes, this mouth of my Lord, will speak judgment and justice; he will smite the impious with his lips, and

exterminate the wicked from the face of the earth. He will open the abstruse passages of the scriptures, and disclose the very secrets of heaven. He will make manifest the councils of hearts and destroy the wisdom and inventions of men. The tyrants will be silent in thy sight, and the princes and kings of the earth will stand astonished. Noble and ignoble shall be converted, and the learned shall silence their lips. Because when God speaks, all the corners of the earth shall wax dumb. And even all the powers of the heavens shall stoop to thy commands.

6. O the precious and golden mouth of the Holy of Holies! Who is worthy to kiss thee even once only, or even to touch an hair of thy head? None but that pure and holy soul who said: "Let him kiss me with a kiss of his mouth." The soul that loves demands a kiss; but she that fears, dares not approach. Nothing doth so much reconcile us to God, nothing doth so much appease his wrath, as the pure love of him, and the contempt of ourselves. I beseech thee, dear Child, my sweetest Jesus, thou little great Child, use this mercy to thy servant, as to admit him, by an humble graciousness, to touch and embrace thee, and to kiss thee with kisses of love, whilst thou art yet a child and lodgest in a manger. For so thou art loved more deliciously; thou art embraced more dearly; thou art carried more easily; and art far less feared. But thou once come to man's estate, there is no more doing in that sort; thou art then to undertake things of more maturity. All things have their time. It is now a time of embracing; but then it will prove a time of lamenting. When, for a kiss of the mouth, thou

shalt be presented with a cup composed of bitter ingredients. Now the joy of the nativity is sweet and in season : but then great sorrow and compassion is far more suitable, when thou art stretched out naked upon the cross, who art now wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

7. Give me, most loving child, the kiss of thy charity, and receive in exchange the service of my humility. Look upon my fervent desire, and bless me with a sacred kiss of thy mouth, and let it be to me a sign of peace, and a bond of mutual love, which can never be untied. I know, and I am confident of it, that thy touch is sovereign, and heals, thy embraces unite, thy kiss imprints love in our hearts. Whom thou inwardly touch, thou cure of carnal affections: whom thou embrace, whom thou unite unto thee : and whom thou dost sweetly kiss, thou inflame with thy love. Now let me know what thou thinkest of it, and make me experience what is said.

Take, saith the child, a kiss, and understand the mystery : for none knoweth but who receiveth it, and none receive it but they who have learnt to walk in spirit. Then I kiss thee, when I infuse the gift of my love into thy heart. Then I embrace thee, when I draw all the affections of my heart unto thee, so that there is nothing in creatures that can either draw or allure thee. But then it is that thou kissest me, when thou art contrite with a sincere love, and seekest comfort from no creature. Thou kissest my feet, if thou dost follow the footsteps of my humility rather out of love than fear. Thou kissest my hands, if thou dost ascribe all thy good works, as



well these already done, as those to be done hereafter, not to thyself but to me. And then thou dost embrace me, when thou feelest thyself united to me by the inmost affection of thy heart, and claspeth me so ardently, that thou would be wholly mine, reserving to thyself no part of thine own love. Then thou mayest pronounce with the spouse in the Canticles : My beloved is mine and I his, who feeds amongst the lilies. If thou didst freely and absolutely relinquish thyself and condemn all terrene things, I would admit thee into the number of my familiar friends, and enrich thee with all their virtues. For if any be wholly devoted, and gives over himself to me, I will be reciprocally all his, and lie wholly open to him. For therefore I am God incarnate, that man may be blessed in me for ever. I gave myself wholly to man, that man might give himself wholly to me : for my delights are to be with the sons of men, to whom too I came to give the kingdom of heaven, and lead him by the contempt of the world to the eternal fellowship of the angels.

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### MEDITATION.

TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN THAT SHE WOULD SHEW US  
HER SON JESUS.

My spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour (salvation.) Rejoice this day holy Mary, whilst thou bringest forth the joys of our new salvation. Rejoice, immaculate, unspotted mother, because the flourishing glory

of thy virginity remains unblemished. Rejoice, O thou child-bearing Virgin; because thou art free from the curse and shame of women. Worthily mayest thou rejoice in Jesus thy Saviour; because thou contained him in thy womb, whom the heavens are not able to comprehend; and with thy sacred hands placed him in the manger. Worthily dost thou adore him being born of thee in time, whom thou knowest to have God his Father above thee. Deservedly dost thou afford him the good offices of a mother, who bestowed upon thee the effect of an inviolable generation. Worthily doth thy spirit rejoice in him above all things, by whose grace and favour thou art made so sublime and celestial. Heaven and earth do praise thee, and all their ornaments and beauties offer thee thanksgiving. Dearest Virgin, let my soul praise, and let all that is within me, exult with singular reverence in thy presence. No tongue is sufficient to relate thy praises, nor mind of man to meditate thy excellencies. And therefore I bow unto thee with greatest humility. O mild Mary, Mother of God! receive my ardent prayers, and give ear to the earnest desires of my heart with an affectionate graciousness.

2. My soul desires to see Jesus, because I well know that he is truly my *Good*. Show me that hidden treasure, which thou hast lockt up in thy bosom. I believe that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, and the first and only begotten of thy fruitful virginity. I confess him to be my God, my Creator, and my Redeemer, who is this day born for my salvation. Him it is I desire to see through thy favourable assistance, and reverently to adore him.

Thou hast folded him up in clothes, and thence it is that he cannot be easily seen nor known by strangers. For unless thou, O holy Mother, vouchsafe to show him, who will deserve to see him? For by thee we have access to thy Son, and by the Son to the Father. Show him to me, then, and it shall be to me the prime and principal thing. I neither petition nor seek for any other solace, save Jesus thy Son, my only refuge, thy singular joy. O Holy Mary, I have an earnest and a longing desire to behold Jesus, whom I know thou lovest before all, and above all things. Jesus is my hearts's desire, yea my affections cry after Jesus. If thou wilt, replies she, see Jesus, thou must then have pure and clear eyes. If you covet to see Jesus, earnestly endeavour to behave thyself devoutly and humbly in all things. If you will see Jesus, you must abandon all terrene things and even contemn yourself. O my dearly beloved Mary, I know I am too impure and far too unworthy to look upon thy Son. Yet rest I cannot, until I have a sight of him. I cannot contain myself from suing, the abundance of my heart's affection compels me to prove importunate. I know he desires to be sued to, and thou willingly befriendest his suitors, and thence I conclude that I must not easily give over my suit.

3. O Jesus, Son of God, I beseech thee have mercy upon me, show thyself to a soul that seeks thee, and covets to see thy countenance. Why wouldst thou come into the world, if thou wouldst not be seen by men? why wouldst thou be born, if thou wouldst not be known? And why didst thou chuse to be put in this place, but that thou mightest

be found with more facility, and be seen and possessed more manifestly? I was not able to ascend into heaven to see thee, and therefore didst thou come into the world that we might have thee at hand. Do not therefore deny thyself to me, or else thou compellest me to lament and moan. If thou wouldst not be seen, why didst thou reveal thyself to the shepherds? for they came with speed and saw thee. If thou desirest to be concealed, why didst thou call the kings to thy cradle by the mystery of a star? nay thou desiredst certainly to be seen; because thou makest thyself to be sought by many. And therefore I must see thee too. And though I be neither shepherd nor king, yet am I one that willingly would be of thy sheep, and be governed by his superiors. And unless I see thee I will not repose, nor will I be quiet until I have thee in my possession. Grant then that I may see thee, and thou shalt soon see me in a peaceable silence. For thou art that dearly beloved whom I desire to see. I care not for seeing heaven, and earth, and sea, and all things comprised therein, so that I may have but one sight of thee. In comparison of thee all things are poor and vile until I have the happiness to see and rejoice in thee. I pronounce it but once, but it shall be my *Memorial* for ever. My demand is short, but I desire to insist long upon it. Come now then and satisfy my desire, and replenish me with the sight of thy countenance. If thou dost refuse me this, know that thou dost not a little sadden me. And if thou makest me sad, who will be able to comfort me? For came not I hither to be comforted by thee, and exceedingly to rejoice in that sight.

4. Come, saith he, O thou man of good desires, come and see. I am Jesus whom thou seekest. If therefore thou seekest me let all other things be-gone. Apply thy heart hither and behold thy Lord. Behold me in spirit, as did the holy prophets of old, who, being enlightened by faith, foretold that I was to be born of a virgin. For here the eye of the heart is required, and such an eye be-holds me; but the bodily eye is not necessary here-in; yea, for the most part, it is prejudicial. For he that believes in me sees me: and he that loves me enjoys me. And therefore by believing in me thou shalt see me : and by loving me thou shalt possess me. Observe this diligently, and consider it, and thy soul shall be comforted. Look upon my humi-lity, and poverty, and thou shalt find much edifica-tion therein. View all that is round about me, and thou shalt meet with nothing that savours of curiosity; see how when I was rich and full of all stores, I be-came poor and necessitous for thy love. Observe how like a pilgrim I live upon the earth, nor was I born in a house of mine own, but in a stable. Pon-der all these things fully.

5. So it was indeed, O my Lord Jesus, and thence my soul takes compassion on thee, seeing thy wants: and my conscience is sufficiently reprov'd by mine own impatience and superfluity. If thy very begin-ning be such, what will thine end be? to wit thou that camest to suffer, madest choice of poverty and objection, in lieu of riches and honours. Behold yet further, my hands and feet, see how I am bound up like an impotent person, remaining under my mother's care, weeping like one of the sons of men. And

how canst thou smile, while thou dost consider that a God weeps for thee. Behold my fair, pleasing, and gracious countenance which is able to banish all sadness and vexation. Yet mind not only this exterior beauty, which, as well the good as bad may equally behold, and which as yet the enemy is able to defile, but extend the eyes of thy heart to my inward and permanent beauty. Observe therefore what a great love I had for thee, who would become man for thy sake. Consider my wisdom which I reserved entire, because I took thy nature upon me, but not thy sin; and thy punishment but not thy crime. Observe the fulness of grace which I brought into the world, and the supernatural light which I desired to infuse into the hearts of all the faithful. Whom of all the saints had so great a desire for my incarnation, as I had to be incarnated? for as soon as ever the time appointed arrived I was instantly conceived God man; the angel announcing the same, and Mary consenting thereunto. Weigh therefore my inestimable love, who wholly burnt with the desire of man's salvation and redemption, and was able to deny him nothing that was necessary or conducing thereunto.

6. O that thou didst now see my most ardently burning heart, and feel, at least in some small measure, that divine love which I have to thee; thou wouldst never cease to love and praise me, never wouldst thou weigh thy labours and sufferances. See with the interior eyes of the soul how divine and human nature are united together in one person, and how this most excellent union remains inseparable. Consider the circumstances of both the natures according to thy possibility and desire. For all the



treasures of God's wisdom lie hid in me ; nor can any man without me, have hope of salvation in his life time, nor of life everlasting at his death. Let thine eyes therefore be continually fixed upon me, and thy heart always remain with me : and repose in me above all the things that can possibly be desired. For I am thy Lord God who made thee : and I took thy nature upon me, that I might draw thee to me. Come to me with all security, I am thy brother, and am prepared to die for thee. Why dost thou delay ? draw near : make haste, bid farewell to all things which are not indeed thine, and do but serve to hinder thee. If thou dost thus, thou shalt find thy beloved, in whom thou shalt most happily rejoice, and bear all adversities with more facility. Have a special care that no wayward and loose desires enter into thy heart, which may hurt, and disturb, vainly employ, or inwardly obscure the same. Nothing ought to be admitted between thee and me, which might hinder union, diminish charity, take away liberty, blemish purity, or disquiet the peace of the heart. But who is capable of this, O Lord ? But he that believes nothing can suffice him save the chief good, which I am, from whom is all good, in in whom are all good things, be they in heaven or earth ; in the sea and in all those deep bottoms. He that seeks me alone before all things and above all things ; and keeps me continually in his heart : who despiseth himself for me, and loves me purely for my own sake ; he I say, is able to contemplate, behold, and praise me, and to exult in the Holy Ghost together with Mary, now and for ever. Amen.

## MEDITATION.

## HOW JESUS IS LOST AND FOUND IN THE TEMPLE.

“The child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not.” Thou hast heard, O faithful soul, how within these few days, the amiable Jesus revealed himself to the shepherds and kings, and what great joy that was to his parents; and there accrued no small joy, even to thee to, by reason of the abundance of good news thou then heardst. But alas, sad and dolorous business hath happened this day, which justly strikes the hearts of all the auditors with astonishment. For news is brought that the beloved Jesus is lost by his parents, and, ah me! even at that time when they went up to the Temple at the solemnity. O sudden change of the hand of the Highest! for if Jesus be lost, what joy can the heart of man take? since he that hath lost Jesus, hath lost more than the whole world. Had it not been better they had staid at home, than to have lost Jesus in the way? Alas, what a solemnity is this, which is clouded with so great calamity? for there can be no greater sorrow than to say that the joy of the sorrowful is lost. Let no pious soul harbour any doubt, but that Mary was much saddened in this loss of her son. Had she not remained privately at Nazareth with much more joy and content, than to have appeared this day at Jerusalem? But that pious mother would by all means, observe the custom of the holy law, and afford thereby an ex-

ample of perfect obedience to all men. And therefore leaving her own house and city, she would visit the Temple of God together with her Son and Joseph. Now, to show her patience, and for our greater advantage, God permitted Mary to lose her son, and being lost, to seek him with much sorrow: to find him two days after in the Holy Temple, and to bring back her found treasure with more joy.

But, O blessed parents, how came it to pass that you suffered so beloved a child to absent himself from your presence? Where were your eyes, when they were not fixed upon Jerusalem? How shall I excuse so great a negligence in you? Were you not worthy to lose him, whom you have kept with so little care? but again how do I dare reprehend you in any thing, since I know you to be most holy and devout in all things? And how durst this best child go any where without your knowledge and permission? did he not seem to minister you occasion of excessive sorrow in absenting himself so long from your respected eyes? Was it happily lawful for him to do what he pleased, because what he did, he did with God? It pleases me well, because it so pleased him: whom none can argue of doing amiss, being God himself. For the eternal wisdom of the Father could do nothing unwisely who disposeth of all the world in equity. He did all things well therefore, not only when he revealed his presence to his friends, but even then too, when he hid his face from his beloved for certain causes.

3. And Jesus ascended to the solemnity of the legal feast, not to be sanctified according to the law, or to purify his prayer, who was born holy; but to

purchase pardon for us, and teach us to frequent the church to obtain heavenly benefits. He, being the lord and master of all men, went into the temple to hear those masters and doctors: that children and youths might learn, (even from their tender age) to read, to frequent the schools, hearken to good doctrine, to be attentive to their masters, not to run about the streets, nor spend their time in idle sports.\* Because the ardent desire of learning the arts, is a great ornament to young years, and the understanding is enabled thereby to make progress in the divine scriptures: that thence God may be more loved by the more frequent hearing of the word of God, being clearly expounded by the doctors, and committed to the book of a happy memory. So that the child Jesus gave an example both to the young and old to continue the study of wholesome wisdom, that none might remain idle, none give ear to vain things: but that boys should humbly hear their masters, diligently ask their doubts of them, and study regularly and orderly: and that old men (according to their measure of grace, and the capacity of youths) should prudently teach and faithfully deliver the rules of faith as they had received them from the holy apostles and prophets, by tradition: to them that all those that hear the word may know Jesus sitting in the midst of the doctors, and still increase more and more in that knowledge, and devoutly give praises to God, who conferred that grace upon the doctors. And as masters exceed the rest in doctrine and wisdom, so ought they to excel them in good life, and well-composed manners. Let, therefore, as well the learned as unlearned, study to imitate those

holy examples of humility and obedience left by Jesus Christ, and to subject themselves to the divine will. For Christ in his own person gave an example of both, being a child of twelve years old, and a heavenly doctor all at once: he gave ear to masters and humbly bowed down as other children do, and being most mildly checked by his blessed mother, he forthwith willingly obeyed his parents, and went away with them, being as tractable in his manners, as absolutely subject to all human and divine laws as was fitting and decent, as well in what was to be done, as what was to be left undone.

4. Grant me grace, O Lord Jesus, more diligently to look into the history of this thy act. For I find the same thing often to pass in spirit with me, which whilst thou wast present in flesh, thou didst once only with thy mother, in that she lost thee, and found thee again. How often, alas! do I lose thee by the demerits of my sins? How sad I walk when I am deserted by thy grace, and left to mine own poverty and misery without consolation! What wonder is it then if I grievously lament and moan, being deprived of thy sovereign sweetness, and destitute, in a manner, of all hopes of recovering those delights? Ah how long seems that delay, how irksome that hour wherein I want divine consolation: because my beloved Jesus, my comforter, is absent, and I know not when he will return again? What shall I do, whither shall I go to seek Jesus whom my soul loves? Where is he now, who is wont to rejoice me with singular joy? I know, alas! I know that if he has a will to hide himself, none will be able to find him out, none will come near him,

none will apprehend him, because his hour is not yet come. And again, if he please to discover himself he is instantly at our door, he enters in while the gates are shut, he visits the house of our soul; and makes himself known by so certain proofs, that there is no need to ask, "who art thou?" Because the fire of love infused into the heart makes manifest that Jesus is come, and he it was who wrought all these wonders. In the time of this trial, I am often troubled and afflicted in myself, and stand in admiration at this secret distribution of thy favours, O most sweet Jesus. Why, I beseech thee, dost thou so often and by surprise, as it were, try me in sight, thou who art otherwise so sweet and without gall? Such as have already tried it know what I say, and even all they too, who desire to be thy disciples, shall quickly experience the same. This proceeds not out of guile or ignorance, but out of a blessed zeal of our private spiritual advancement. And therefore what I do not thoroughly understand, I rather wholly commit to thy wisdom, which doth nothing without a certain reason, however the cause thereof is unknown to me. Yet in this prime point of difficulty, my misery meets with no little consolation, in that the sweet Virgin Mary too did once lose Jesus, and much lamented that she had lost her son; nor was she content to return home until she found Jesus, her singular joy: whom, whilst she missed of where she conceived to find him, she found him where she least expected. For had she known he had been sitting among the doctors with so much zeal for his Father's glory, she had either not sorrowed at that event, or else she had congratulated with her blessed



Son, seeing his solemn acts and wise answers. Therefore Jesus is not always found where he is sought, but is often there where he is least conceived to be.

5. Let none therefore presume as though he possessed Jesus alone. Let none condemn another, because he knows not how grateful one may be in the sight of God, though he appear not so to men, but outwardly seems abject and vile. For even Jesus himself was unknown to many ; a few only knowing how excellent and great he was. He discovered himself to whom he pleased ; and when he pleased, he hid himself. Yet did he all things profitably and with a just distribution. If I lose Jesus then, it is neither a strange nor a new thing, yet I find it very prejudicial to me, and a great grief of heart. However I confess myself guilty, and worthy of many stripes, because I did not keep my heart so watchfully as I ought, but I went on with too much coldness and negligence, and therefore I lost the grace of Jesus, and I know not who will restore it me, unless he will please again to take pity of his poor servant. Most clement Mother help to drive away this my calamity ; assist me, my dear advocate, be present to my succour, O Virgin Mary, thou gate of life and now door indeed, I seek comfort, I implore thine assistance. Thou best knowest what a grief it is to have lost Jesus, and what an excess of joy to find him again. If it happened thus to thee, O most blessed Virgin, who wast without fault, what wonder is it, if his grace be not present to me as I desire, who transgress in so many things ? But what am I to do to find him again ? For if there be any hope to find him, verily it must be by thy counsel ; yea,

and by thy merits too, who art nearer and dearer to him than all of us. Teach me therefore the way to recover my beloved, and accompany me till I find him out. And then having found and seen him, I will sing with thee in joy and jubilee, saying: "Let all the world congratulate with me, because I have found him whom my soul loveth." And it is even he whom thou broughtest forth, O most chaste Virgin Mother.

6. To these things thus she replies: Hear good counsel, imitate my example, and thy soul shall be comforted. If at any time thou lovest Jesus, be not diffident, be not too solicitous and troubled, be not slothful, desist not from prayer, run not after worldly consolations. But retire thyself into some secret place, deplore thy misfortunes, and thou shalt find Jesus in the Temple of thy heart, whom thou lost by thy sins whilst thou didst delight in vain things. For Jesus is not found in the streets of the city, nor in the company of sporters, nor yet in the land of those that live luxuriously; but in the congregation of the just, and in the church of the Saints.

7. He is to be sought with sighs and groans, who was lost by dissoluteness. He is to be kept with much watchfulness and care, who withdrew himself through our carelessness. He is to be sued to with fear and reverence, who detests sluggards and ungrateful persons. He is to be called back with all possible humility, who was driven away by pride. He ought to be appeased by frequent and attentive prayer, who hears not the wavering and inconstant man, by reason of his wandering heart. He ought to be praised with exceeding great thanksgiving,

who is ready to bestow his grace. He ought to be embraced with most ardent love, who spares all, shews mercy to all, bestows his blessing gratis, and refuses his grace to none that seek him. And if at any time he delay, yet he forsakes not him that perseveres in prayer. Yea even whilst he is not aware, he comes again to visit him, enlightening him more clearly, and instructing him more cautiously, that he may never presume of himself, but humbly and devoutly confide in him. If you observe these things diligently, you will quickly appease Jesus in Jerusalem, because his place is made in peace. Jesus will preach the sacred words of his mouth in the temple of thy heart; Jesus will stay with you all the day long as in his chamber. He will teach you about all things that belong to salvation. For what virtue and grace soever is found in angels or men: or what good soever shines in creatures, all is his. We ought always therefore, to invoke Jesus, always seek him, always desire him, always remember him, always praise him, always venerate him, always love him, and offend him in nothing at all; but worship and adore him in all sanctity and purity, who is God, blessed above all things for ever and ever. Amen.

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## MEDITATION.

### ON THE FOUR WAYS OF SEEING JESUS.

1. Blessed be the eyes which see what you see. We must often call this sweet word of our Saviour Jesus Christ to remembrance. To whom we must

continually raise the interior eyes of our soul in spirit, whom the angels desire to behold. For the sight of him rejoiceth man's heart above all things ; the fruition of him fills the whole desire of the soul ; his countenance is the very beatitude of all the saints in heaven. But what shall we do, who being as yet pilgrims on earth, and are not able to enjoy the eternal brightness of his glory ? They shall see him, but not yet. They shall see him at a distance, not as present and at hand : for "they see him now by faith, but not yet by sight. They see now too, but by a glass, in a dark manner, but then face to face." They see now in passing by, but then permanently. They see now imperfectly and obscurely, but then clearly and openly. They see now clearly, insomuch as they believe constantly and as they ought, but then they shall see all things thoroughly and without any veil. Blessed be, therefore, those eyes which now behold Jesus by the light of faith, that they may afterwards see him in his kingdom with the Angels of God. And the conversation of such persons is spiritually in heaven, though they be detained as yet bodily on earth.

2. But now tell me, O thou devout and faithful soul, thou who lovest Jesus Christ with the whole endeavour of thy heart, and labourest to follow his footsteps ; tell me, I say, if thou wert to choose, and it were in thy possibility to see Jesus, in what form wouldst thou wish to see him ? Whether (were it lawful to see him) would thou choose to see him lying in a manger ; or sitting amongst the doctors ; or preaching to the people ; or else hanging upon the cross ? Which of all these ways doth thou most

desire? What dost thou most sweetly relish? What doth most move thee? I will not, saith he, be a chooser in this behalf. I will not be at mine own disposal. I will not follow mine own inclination, nor be led by mine own bent, but remain wholly content and fully satisfied with the good pleasure of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is able to search, and invisibly dive into the secret corners of my heart; that he may be all in all to me, according to the exigency of my frailty. Let him freely do what he finds most agreeable in his blessed sight, let him shew himself such, and in such sort as is most pleasing in his divine eyes: for all that he doth shall be welcome to me. Because if I consider the matter aright, he is whole and entire to me in every one of those ways. Nor will any variety of his shape or age, be able to alter the belief of truth, because Christ is, and ought truly to be, adored in all these sundry ways. And I conceive it safer for me to commit myself to his good pleasure without any choice of mine. Yet I have always a fervent and restless desire, amiably to behold him. What a great and peculiar mark of grace, if he grant me the happiness to behold him any one of the aforesaid ways. Wherein I readily accept, from this instant, his will, that it may be done with me according to his word in all things, as well those that are worthy to be desired, as those that produce contradiction and heaviness, so it be otherwise without offence in me. Let him only will, and have the goodness to show himself unto me, I will find no fault that I see him not in the quality and form of a man, so I may be permitted to see him in his deity. But whereas this

kind of sight is the highest of all, and appertains to the blessed in heaven, I will content myself in the meantime, if after the manner of all the faithful, I may have the happiness to behold Jesus in his human shape, as he sometimes revealed himself to many. And therefore if he shew himself a child lying in a cradle, I will resolutely adore him God a child, debased in flesh for my sake. I will praise and magnify the admirable gift of so great piety and abjectness replenished with all joy and delight. For who would not be even overjoyed to see so sweet a child, to whom the angels sing praise ; to embrace that holy little one free from all contagion of sin ; visited by the blessed shepherds, and adored with much veneration by the most famous kings. Behold this doth more dearly delight, and speaks more tenderness and affection to the heart, to see true God and man weeping in a narrow manger, than all his other works and wonders, whereby he was made famous to the world. To a sight of this nature (namely, to behold the God of glory in frail flesh, and the Creator of heaven and earth in the form of a servant) a pure eye, an humble mind, a firm faith, and a clear conscience, is required.

3. But what is the meaning of this, that the eternal wisdom of the Father is found in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and answering their questions ? truly one may have the happiness to behold a most beautiful youth of twelve years of age, adorned with all kind of good manners, one that from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet hath no spot or blemish in him, who can already speak in perfection, giving answers to the doctors, and afford



pleasing convictions of an ingenious probity ; so that the eyes of all men are fixed upon him, with a certain sudden admiration, and all desire to be recreated with his sweet presence and communication. And therefore I too desire to contemplate the face of Jesus attentively, and that with a little more than wonted ardour ; and to observe the prudent words which flow from his mouth for my edification.

4. Behold the child Jesus, the Lord of the angels, is set in the midst of the doctors. He gives ear to those masters on earth, who teachest the angels in heaven. He puts his demands to the ancients, that all the younger sort may learn to reverence old people, and to be silent in their presence. He comports himself modestly, he sits quietly, and gravely holds his peace. Being asked, he replies discreetly, showing no levity of childhood either in his words or actions ; and among the wise he represents a lively picture of perfect maturity in his youthful years. If one should have sought all Jerusalem over, was there any hopes of finding out such a child, so beautiful, so wise ? Ah, no, there was none such to be found within all the confines of Israel. No, had even Solomon himself, and all the sons of kings, been also present. No, no, there was none like to him in heaven or earth, nor amongst all the lawgivers and masters of the world. It was no wonder then that Mary mourned so much when she had lost her so singularly beloved child, who was comely and fair above all the sons of men. His countenance was serene and marvellously delightful, his eyes clear-sighted, his lips pure, his speech eloquent, his an-

swers full of wisdom. His silence edifies, his answers instruct; all his sayings and doings are virtuous and powerful. If he afford so delicious fruits in the very bud, what fruit will he not bring forth in the ripeness of the harvest?

5. O how delightful a thing it is to be a loving soul, to contemplate Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God, illustrious for signs and wonders wrought among the people, and preaching the words of life to his disciples, sweeter than honey from the honey-comb! If I had but the happiness to converse with my Lord and Master, one only day in this world, I would esteem myself blest, nor would I ever forget that day, by reason of the sublime doctrine, and humble conversation of the Son of God among the sons of men: who despised no poor nor weak person, but was so gracious as even to eat with publicans and sinners. Alas! how senseless is that man, who turns his eyes, though but even for a short moment, from the most saintly pattern left to the world to follow. We must needs conceive, that he who will not be brought to frame his life according to the humility of an humble God, may remain long unlearned, and a very fool indeed. The great Saint Paul (being illuminated by God), conceived and wrote admirably well of it, saying, Christ is life to me, and death is my gain. And therefore mine eyes shall be always turned to my Lord Jesus Christ, because he is my rule and my wisdom: for the very perfection of all the virtues shine in him, as in a bright glass. Nor is there anything better or more perfect to be found and known, and contemplated, in all books and sciences, than in this book of life.

this true light, which enlightens indeed all men, but in a special manner transforms the poor in spirit into his love.

6. Whence is it that the passion of my Lord Jesus Christ is sweeter to me than all the precious ointments, comprising the treasury of all graces in a short abridgment. And therefore I am most of all delighted to behold Jesus hanging upon the cross, and showing me the most sacred wounds of his body, being wan and pale with pains and dolour, while yet it burns with the fire of love, and begets more compunction in our hearts than all his other works. So that for the love of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, I neither desire to think, read, speak, nor hear, but of him. God of his infinite goodness effects these things in my heart, by a new addition of grace, who denies not mercy to the sinner, and is present and propitious to the pious desire of the devout soul, that the sacred passion of my Lord Jesus Christ may never depart out of my memory, but that the dolour and love of the most beloved crucified Lord may pierce and wound my heart, and most closely and strongly unite and inflame it that the whole world may appear vile, and Jesus crucified alone may be more delightful to me than all things, and that it may conduct me most fervently and frequently into the most inward secrets of his passion.

7. The beloved Jesus is, yet further, able wonderfully to reveal himself, and more fully to instruct us in point of his most holy life, precious death, and glorious resurrection, by many more admirable ways, according to the fervency of the loving soul's desires in such sort as that what the sacred gospel teaches

and discovers exteriorly by words, he, by the virtue of his holy spirit, doth spiritually and wisely disclose in our hearts ; and that without the noise of words, with a bright light of the prime truth, making us capable of the glorious divinity, which sometimes purified souls are permitted to enjoy in their raptures, for the consolation of man's frailty, according to the sacred promise of the blessed Jesus : who said, " I am the door, by me if any enter, he shall be saved ; and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures."

## FOR PASSION SUNDAY.

## A LAMENTATION UPON THE PASSION.

“All ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow:” Now is the memory of our Saviour’s Passion celebrated in the church; and it is but fitting that the children of the church suffer and condole together with their Lord and Master, who deigned to die corporeally for them, that they might live eternally both in body and spirit. Let them not therefore prove ungrateful, or esteem themselves unconcerned; but piously call to mind, that they who are termed sons, are so indeed; the church—the spouse of Christ, provided that they adhere to Christ with a filial affection, and with faithful devotion. O how great the charity of the Almighty Father; how great the love of his only Son; how great the benignity of the Holy Ghost; which did overflowingly spread itself over all mankind! What dost thou say to this, O my soul? wilt thou either prove ungrateful, or canst thou be forgetful of such excessive charity? how canst thou refuse

him a return of love, who loved thee so ardently? love him who loved thee, and so excessively loved thee, that he rather chose to undergo death than that thou shouldst perish. This was the charity, than which none had greater, and therefore it fully satisfied for all.

2. But what wilt thou do? and what wilt thou repay to God for his death? something must needs be done, though thou art not able to render him any due retribution. For all the creatures upon earth, even all the saints and angels in heaven, are not able worthily to give God due thanks for his precious death, which he freely suffered for thee. Call therefore to mind his holy passion, and study to imitate the same according to thy poor ability: because even this, to be willing to suffer tribulations, is to return him great thanks. Withdraw thy mind therefore from outward cares, and turn and fix all thy thoughts upon thy crucified Lord; for by him thou mayst the better exclude vain representations out of thy heart, and mayst more mildly endure all kind of dolour, even those of the body too. And now whereas it is fitting to apply our thoughts to the Passion of Christ, according to the appointment of the church, therefore thou oughtest to direct all thy exercises more attentively unto it. If the preceding days of fasting have slipped over negligently; at least now in these fifteen days, let a fresh devotion be kindled anew in thy heart, in memory of Christ's Passion. And if you reflect that you have done any thing well, add yet better deeds to those past. Be now more careful and more fervent, for so the memory of Christ's Passion exacts at your hands,



and the general mourning which the church puts on for the death of her Redeemer.

3. Let it not be burthensome nor tedious to turn in thought all the bitter Passion of Christ in thy meditations, which he was so desirous to endure for thy sake: gather every day, and carry away with thee, one sprig of myrrh, out of the vineyard of the God of Sabbath, and place it in thy breast for the safe custody of thy heart; because the odour of life breathes out of it; and if thou consider it well, it will afford thee a comfort in thy adversities and reproaches. For many have experienced and tasted, that Christ's sacred stripes and wounds were so dearly delightful, to such as frequently exercised themselves upon the Passion, that tears streamed down through vehemence of sorrow, and they were wonderfully inflamed to endure contumelies and pains for the love of Christ, out of a strong desire of love and compassion. Yea, some have even been so transported out of themselves, and so wholly transformed from self-love, that they desired to enter into his bowels, to feel his sufferings even to the death of the cross, wishing in their very souls to be abased, and esteemed vile and miserable by all creatures, that Christ alone might be magnified in their hearts, and they only might be despised.

4. So ardent is the blood of Christ, poured out by love, that it powerfully inflames those who intimately meditate upon it; and causes such a forgetfulness of one's self, that he esteems contempt to be joy, and little weighs all bodily punishments. For so the vehement lover begins, by his sufferings, to be framed to the likeness of his dear love, while he

gives himself up to him freely and without reserve, who to redeem him spared himself in nothing. From hence springs an excessive love; a most dear consolation is afforded; a singular devotion grows up; carnal affection dies; the mind is elevated to God; the understanding is enlightened, and the word of the prophet is tasted, saying: "And how excellent is my inebriating cup!" But whereas this is a great mystery, and no one of himself is able to reach it, thou art therefore, O my soul, to ask, to seek, and to knock, to the end that the most mild Jesus (who is replenished with the Holy Ghost and power, being rich towards all that call upon him) would mercifully lay open unto thee this most precious treasure, which lies locked up in himself: and that he would make that sovereign ointment of devotion flow out of his sacred wounds all over thy heart; that so thou also mightest learn to suck honey out of the rock, and oil from the hardest stone, which is hidden from the proud, but lies open to humble and devout hearts. It is covered from carnal men, who relish nothing but earthly things, but is frequently tasted by pure and simple souls. This is God's wonderful dispensation, that the meek and humble should be capable of that which the haughty and curious cannot comprehend.

5. You will observe many who read and search into high and sublime matters, and yet have very little or no devotion at all to the Passion of Christ; because they employ themselves in external cares, and seek comfort in earthly things; and thence their hearts grow dry and senseless within, so that they cannot taste what belongs to Jesus. They are busied

about many things, but edified in few. They neglect profitable and necessary things, love subtle things, and despise such as are simple : they are violently carried divers ways, and search for novelties, nor do they yet find rest, nor are they satiated with what they hear ; because so long as they seek not Jesus by his Cross and Passion, they shall not attain to true internal sweetness, and to the knowledge of the Deity. For Jesus alone lays open a passage to his divinity by his holy humanity. Which St. Paul understood well, when he said : Because in him all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God lie hid ; and therefore, omitting the words of worldly wisdom, he exercised himself in the Life and Passion of Christ, saying : "For I judged myself to know nothing among you but Jesus, and him crucified."

6. Mark this, my soul ; and leaving all curiosities and vanities, direct the interior eye of thy heart to Jesus crucified. Watch carefully, in this holy time at least, and pray to the Father on Mount Olivet with Jesus, that as the blessed cup of the Passion was given him to drink, so an ardent love may be given to thee amorously to please him. More shalt thou find in the wounds of Christ Jesus, than in the possession of the whole world. And the Passion of Christ alone shall lead thee into a greater astonishment than the speculation of all created things. This I say, that thou shouldst become more frequently addicted to the Passion of Christ, and more intensely consider it ; yea, that thou shouldst let no day nor hour pass without calling it to mind. For whatever thou readest or hearest of the deeds or sayings of saints, thou shalt more plentifully and delightfully

meet with in the Life and Passion of Christ. For the venerable Passion of Christ excels all the sufferings of the saints in every respect, because all theirs are sanctified by Christ's only Passion; and therefore they become acceptable and meritorious by his death. For he is the Holy of Holies, who hath power to pardon the sins of men; to render all their works grateful. And he offered himself a holy sacrifice to God, for the redemption of all sinners.

7. But in particular, the Passion of Christ doth far outstrip all the saints' sufferings, in dignity, in bitterness, and in fruit or profit. In dignity, the person of him who suffers excels; for he was the Son of God. In bitterness, if we consider the most painful wounds of his body, because it was of a most noble, tender, and delicate complexion; finally, in fruit or profit, if we look upon the redemption of mankind; for by his death, which he innocently suffered, he delivered us from eternal death; he merited for us the title and glory of heavenly beatitude. And therefore he invites all his faithful servants to the consideration of his passion, by the mouth of the prophet, saying: "O all ye that pass by, consider and see whether there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.

8. But alas! alas! O Lord, how many do inconsiderably pass by thee; with dry eyes, and without compassion of heart, they regard thy cross; hardly do they behold it. They run into the churches without reverence, and kneeling down, they make more haste out than in. The world draws with more delight to its pleasures, than the divine and heavenly songs to the house of God. They are

hardly able to persist in thy praise for a little space, whereas thou hung upon the cross for the long space of three hours for their salvation, heavy laden with dolours and opprobrious taunts. Where are our eyes, O Lord, and whither have we sent our ears, that we attend not unto thee? Convert us unto thee, because we are very easily averted from thee. We quickly forget thy great charity, which thou shewedst to us in thy sacred passion. Thou enduredst so great sorrow, so grievous and unworthy things, without fault, by men for men, whom thou didst create; by thine own nation and people, upon whom too thou hadst heaped so many benefits, as well of old as in the time present; and yet we remain ungrateful and hardhearted. The insensible elements were in convulsion at thy death; and yet the hearts of the sons of men are not touched.

9. Woe be to me a miserable and unhappy wretch. How dry and senseless is my heart! I am quickly sensible upon the least injury, and yet am not touched at all by so many contumelies cast upon my Lord and Master Jesus Christ. I am sensible of any small bodily hurt, and yet weigh not my Lord and Master's most grievous pains. How little charity appears; the head is violently wounded, and yet the heart resents it not. If we be mutually members why do not I suffer with him? And why is not my heart rent with grief? O, my dear Lord, what shall I say to these things? and what shall I do, wretch that I am? Why am I sometimes sooner moved with compassion towards mortal man, than towards thee my creator, my immortal spouse? Why doth the curiosity of vain things more touch me, than thy

hanging upon the cross for love of me? It is a great grief to me that these things do not go nearer to my heart, nor do totally wound me together with thee, as were but most fit. Woe is me that I am so prone to laughter, so sensible of my own suffering, and yet so slow and dry in bewailing thy most bitter passion. And if at any time I conceive compunction, I so quickly put it off again. Thence it is that I profit not, nor perfectly attain to interior sense and feeling. Ah, my God! how comes it to pass, that hearing so many good things of thee, I yet do nothing? I read of thy great and grievous sufferings, and yet I rather become harder-hearted than in any manner melted or mollified. This is no sign of perfect love, nor argument of affectionate compassion. How long shall I remain senseless, and not suffer with thee, who hast suffered for me?

10. Ah, now at least, O most loving and faithful Jesus, while thou hangest pale and and wan upon the cross, O thou only hope of my desolate soul, grant that in this holy time, I may worthily celebrate the memory of thy passion, and enter into thy sacred wounds by an amorous compassion, where, being forgetful of myself, and mindful only of thy sufferings, I may not faint in any tribulation, but freely resign myself to thy holy will. How can I know, or think I love thee, but by suffering tribulations for thy name's sake? For willingly to suffer out of love, and to endure all adversities without complaining, is the most agreeable acknowledgment that man can possibly render thee. For in this are the true lovers of the cross known, that they voluntarily suffer all afflictions whatsoever. And though thou art now



impassible, and subject to no sufferings, but on the contrary crowned with honour and glory, and elevated above all the heavens ; yet in my sufferings to call to mind thy blessed passion, is a thing of much advantage and assistance to me : as also to look upon thee as though thou wast yet in a passible body. When then I contemplate thee taken, bound, stript of thy garments, scorned, spit upon, buffeted, whipped, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, presented with vinegar and gall to drink, pierced with a spear, condemned with thieves, upbraided, blasphemed, despised, abandoned, reproved by all men : finally, dead upon the cross, and buried ; I will not pass over one point, but will faithfully gather together all thy words and deeds, as recorded in the gospel. Nor will I only consider thy wonderful works, but taking thy sufferings and contempts deeply into my consideration, I will much more dearly embrace them, because these are more necessary to my salvation.

11. Thy wonders indeed, O gracious Jesus, do instruct me to believe and venerate thy holy name ; but thy contempts, and painful stripes suffered for my sake, do more incite and inflame me to holy sufferings, to perfect humility and charity. But he that venerates thy wonders only, and looks upon great things alone in thee, must be cautious that he suffer not scandal by the consideration of thy ignominious death. Thou art much to be admired in the works which thou wroughtest by thy divine power, and in them to be praised above all other things ; but in that thou didst patiently please to endure reproaches and curses, thou oughtest much more to be loved.

12. Note this then, O faithful soul, and be grate-

ful to God for all these things. The poor and humble Jesus, who was abandoned by God and man, in great necessity ought to be thy comfort in all thy pressures and tribulations. O sluggish and unprofitable servant, thou art not greater than thy Lord and Master. O Christian thou art not more innocent than Christ. If he suffered so much for thee, what oughtest thou to do for thyself? and what worthy acknowledgment canst thou return unto him? If even he that was a most dearly beloved Son be so abandoned and left to scorn, why art thou afflicted and troubled, if thou be sometimes forsaken, and despised, thou who art so unworthy a servant? Behold thy heavenly Master, thy continual memorial. O thou most fair and exceedingly dear Jesus, Son of God, what shall I chiefly admire in thee? High or abject things? And what shall I principally observe, worthy or unworthy things? Nay, rather both jointly, are both better and truer. I behold thee both beautiful and sublime in thy divine nature; but deformed, despised in thy human nature. Thou that wert from all eternity, sufferedst for a time. Again thou art inwardly fair and amiable to my mind, as also pure and without blemish, because free from all fault, however to the exterior eye thou appearest extremely deformed and covered with wounds. It was for my sins that thou wert thus defiled, wounded, and crucified.

13. Perhaps the corporeal eyes of some proud fools are scandalised, but it fares not so with such as are pious and loving. Nay rather, such as truly love thee, take compassion on thee, and bewail thy condition. I heartily desire to live with such, as

loving thee with all their hearts, follow thee even to the ignominy of the cross. To me thou art no scandal, but the greatest joy and honour. For thy deformity is my beauty; thy stripes and wounds the health of my soul; and thy death, my life. In these I live, and in such is the life of my spirit. Thou wilt rebuke me if I be not mindful of thee, if I place not thy passion in the prime place of my joy. For I am not ignorant who thou art, O thou holy son of God, who vouchsafest to endure these things for me, and my belief is, that thou didst willingly endure them for my sins.

14. I will therefore weep and bewail day and night, and my tears shall fall down my cheeks upon the consideration of thy being bruised and torn in thy blessed passion. David did bitterly lament and weep for Saul and for Jonathan his son. And shall not I deplore the death of my Lord, my King? When Jacob saw the garment of his son Joseph, he rent his garments and wept: and shall I be able to contain myself from tears, when I consider the dolorous death of my Lord and Master? And Joseph seeing Benjamin, his own brother, standing before him, his bowels were straight touched with compassion, and he made haste to lament, and could not contain himself, from weeping; and shall I remain with dry eyes, when I see my Lord barbarously murdered? Let no one think to persuade me to this, let no one prevent me to weep, for so he will much more torment me. My Lord and Master poured out his precious blood for me. And shall I not shed a few tears for him. Would to God I could so lament, that I might move the hearts of

all men to compassion with me. But all men cannot weep, it being the gift of a religious heart, to weep for our Lord out of internal compassion; not to purchase its own content and satisfaction, but to merit God's grace more plentifully thereby.

15. O most cordially dear Jesus, brightness of the eternal glory; O Sun of Justice, why dost thou thus yield to death? Make my soul take compassion of thee with a most inward affection, and break to pieces the hardness of my heart; and grant it may this day be seriously taken up with the memory of thy Passion. Let it faithfully wait upon thee in the spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart, and go along with thee through all thy Passion, and with inward sorrow observe all that thou sufferest. Grant also that I may ardently covet to suffer, and die with thee too, calling to mind what David said of his son Absalon: "My son Absalon, Absalon my son, who will grant that I may die with thee?" Pious affections prevailed with David to move him violently to lament the death of a son who even persecuted him: how much more ought sorrow, sovereignly compassionate, prevail with me in point of thy innocent death, consummated upon the cross for my sake? It ought more to move me that thou wert crucified, and died for me, than though the whole world had been bestowed upon me, or spent for my love.

16. May I therefore die a blessed death, and may my last things resemble those of my Master. Grant me, O Lord, a happy hour of death, and to attain to blessed repose with thee. It were happier for me even now to die with thee, than to live a moment without thee; which, if it be denied me, I will yet

do what a devout affection is wont to do. I will seek out some secret corner, principally that I may more freely and bitterly lament. O Lord I will call to mind thy death, and I will kiss all the scars of thy wounds with the inmost eye of my heart. Let no one this day speak comfort to me; let no one vex me with offering consolation, or intimating anything which is not serious; for I am resolved to receive consolation of no creature, lest thereby I might be hindered to lament my Lord's most bitter Passion. Begone, begone from me, as well domestic as external cares; permit me lonely and solitarily to sit, that I may for a while bewail my beloved crucified for me. Let grief dry up the fountain of my tears, and let no one be found to wipe them, nor to afford me consolation, save only he himself whom I bemoan. O sun and moon, come lament with me, and all your creatures, because this day our Lord and Master is slain. And it is fit that all nature should mourn when the Author of Nature suffers; and that all things should put on sorrow, when the Son of God endures so great misery. Let words therefore cease, where only sorrows are suitable, since my God, crying out with a loud voice, yields up the ghost! Burst out, burst out, whole floods of tears, and stream from the bottom of my heart. Fall all upon the murdered corpse of my Lord, and procure me the interior sight of my soul, that I may at length merit to see him in joy, whom now I lament crucified with heavy groans. Be his sepulchre my place of rest and repose, that his glorious resurrection may put a happy period to all my lamentations and sorrows. Amen:

## OF THE CROSS OF JESUS WHICH HE CARRIED FOR US.

1. And they took Jesus and led him out, and with his cross upon his shoulders he went to the place which is called Calvary. Let us come to the consideration of this dolorous passage of our Lord and Master, and behold this pitiful spectacle with the pious eye of the mind. Behold the innocent Jesus, oppressed with the heavy burden of the cross, is led out betwixt two thieves, and, alas, is dragged amidst loud clamours to be hung upon it. He embraces the contemptible wood in his charitable arms. He puts under it his back (torn with whips), his holy shoulders, and all the feeble members of his body. He bears an undeserved load: he submits his neck to a heavy yoke; he carries it to the designed place that he may produce the fruit of our salvation, against the poison of eternal death.

2. A great scorn it is to the impious, but a sacred mystery to all the faithful. It is a testimony of perdition to the wicked, because they crucify the innocent: but to the virtuous, it is a sign of salvation; because they commiserate and bewail him. The joy of those shall be changed into weeping, but the lamentation of these shall be turned into joy. Our meek Lord therefore very mildly goes on by the way of confusion. Of his own accord he goes without the gates of Jerusalem, over which he so lately wept. He patiently bears the derision of hanging upon the cross procured by his own nation. He resents not the injuries done him, nor doth he violently resist with aversion. He calls not the angels to his aid, nor betakes himself to his friends



for succour. But he goes on without delay, and promptly obeys those malignants. He bears a most heavy burden: all alone he endures the scorn of confusion, and yet will not alone have the joy of honour; because he desires to share the merit of his Passion to all that believe in him. The love of his mother draws him not back from the journey of the cross, nor do the tears of his dearest friends retard him: he is not disquieted with the tumultuous outcries which meet him, nor with the clamorous shouts of the Jews: he is not staid from the work he hath undertaken by his bodily weariness, nor doth he sink under the storms of scandal. He most constantly persists one, and the same, and with a free and calm heart he proceeds on to the place of punishment: as little valuing the glory of the world, as weighing the ignominy of it. Always persisting in his heavenly father's praise, excluding none from his charity, ardently desiring to accomplish his father's commandment appointed from all eternity; and to consummate the work of our Redemption by his cross and passion as it was enjoined him.

3. Now, in this famous example he shows what he had formerly taught by his word. He that will come to me let him deny himself—take up his cross and follow me. Lo thou hast a forerunner in thy more painful ways, Jesus the Son of God, the guide and master of the Gentiles, to deliver them. Follow thy Lord therefore, O faithful servant: O disciple follow thy master: O frail member imitate thy admired head: that by his guidance thou mayst arrive at the kingdom of eternal felicity. If thou dost desire prosperous and pleasant things, fear not

adversities. O sinner follow the just, O man follow thy God, O creature follow thy Creator, O banished man follow thy Redeemer. Cast off servile fear, put on fortitude, fight like a valiant soldier by subduing nature. The cross is the way to salvation: the crown of glory is purchased by pains. Blush not, at Christ's ignominy, if thou aspire to the contemplation of his face in glory. For thee it is that he bears the cross: for thee also he suffered the death of the cross. He gives thee an example of suffering: he smooths the craggy way with his own feet: and shows that the ignominy of the cross ought not to be dreaded, but embraced. The humble Jesus carries his cross for the impious, that the impious may be sanctified: he suffers dolours for vile servants, to make them coheirs of his kingdom. Who would not now earnestly desire to suffer the reproaches and contempts of men, while innocent Christ endures so great and injurious things by men, without any fault at all. The soldier patiently endures that which he sees his king first suffer in his own person. That generous king then, who is King and Lord of all, goes out to fight against the prince of darkness; not sheltered under the favour of a shield, or armed with iron, but armed and fortified with his cross, to which he is to be nailed, and finally upon it to die for his friends. Coming therefore to Calvary, the appointed place, with the banner of his cross, he chose there to erect the title of his name, and to perform the mystery of our salvation: foreknowing that the place which was deputed for confusion, was to be made famous with strange wonders; and that the tree of his cross was to be turned into honour: within a short time too,

to be preached all over the world, and to be respected by all the kings and potentates of the earth.

4. The sign of the cross is venerable in our christian warfare wonderfully glorious, and our singular refuge far above all the aromatical woods, and an unconquerable buckler against the devil's cruelty and snares. There then did Jesus stand, Jesus the standard-bearer of the cross, the captain and patron of all cross bearers, in the midst of most horrible pains. There is he forthwith stripped of all his garments: and naked doth he lie down upon the hard and rough cross, and prayed for those that crucified him. There the omnipotent God permitted himself to be stretched out in form of a cross, to be nailed to it, to be pierced wth a spear, and to be scoffed at and scorned by the wicked, as though he had been a person of no power. There being deprived of all human comfort, he left us a model of perfect abnegation, and extreme poverty. Thus by the touching of his sacred flesh, he consecrated the tree of life, and by the effusion of his precious blood, he dedicated the altar of the cross, there he fulfilled all the sacrifices of the old Testament, which prefigured his Passion, and offered himself up a victim for the world in the odour of sweetness. There he ended his life in a blessed combat; by dying he subdued death, opened the gates of heaven, and led away the penitent thief to his promised Paradise.

5. Whereas Jesus therefore, though otherwise innocent, bore his cross upon his own shoulders, bear thou also thine, because thou hast grievously and frequently offended him, and justly deserved eternal punishment. The cross seems sharp and

burdensome to weak and sickly souls, but the end of it is gladsome and full of profit, and to lovers even delightful and sovereign. Is it not better now to lead a mournful and laborious life for Christ, and to suffer with our crucified Lord, than after the vain and transitory joy of this corruptible life, to be eternally tormented with the devils in hell? For thou shalt be so much more acceptable to God, and worthy of greater glory in the kingdom of heaven, by how much thou dost now suffer more grievous pains and afflictions, not out of consideration of temporal consolations, but in respect of Christ's passion, and the thorny ways wherein he and the saints have walked, who passed through many tribulations. All temporal pains and injuries done us vanish away like<sup>a</sup> a shadow: but the glory of an eternal reward is permanent in heaven, with which Christ will reward thee in the end for thy great patience. Study therefore to proceed in the way of the holy cross, and bear the dolorous picture of thy Jesus crucified always about with thee; and, according as thy frailty will permit, endeavour manfully to imitate him. Resign thyself freely, and faithfully commit all thy concerns to his holy will, who has done and suffered so much for thy salvation. Never wilt thou be able to render him worthy thanks for the least part of his Passion, though thou shouldst even suffer the passions and torments of all the martyrs. But alas, that thou followest our Saviour's cross so coldly; that thou art so little compassionate of Christ's sufferings: that thou servest him not more fervently, and dost not render him thanks incessantly, who esteemed thee so dearly

and so much loved thee above all other creatures, that he refused not to die for thee, but by his innocent death would redeem thee from eternal perdition: for thou hadst been eternally damned, had not Christ been crucified and died for thee. For who could have satisfied for all the sins of men, save Jesus Christ alone, the son of God, the immaculate lamb?

OF THE MERITS OF OUR SAVIOUR'S PASSION, AND OF  
THE DIGNITY OF THE CROSS.

1. We ought all to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein is our salvation, life and resurrection. These words are read and sung in the holy Church, wherein the merit of our Saviour's Passion is commended, which is most worthily preferred before all the sacrifices of the law, and all the actions and virtues of the Saints: for our true salvation and the redemption of mankind depends absolutely on the cross and passion of Christ, whereby Christ redeemed us from our sins; satisfied his father, and subduing death, opened the gates of heaven. This appears by the thief hanging upon the cross, to whom it was said: this day shalt thou be with me in paradise. O the admirable clemency of God, O most dear and delightful answer! O the sovereign benediction of the cross, which absolves the thief from all guilt, and leads him first into heaven amongst all Christians.

2. Let therefore all the faithful signed with the sign of the holy cross, washed and cleansed in Christ's blood, redeemed by his passion, quickened by his death, healed by his wounds, assuaged by his dolour, and honoured by his reproaches, give thanks to

Christ. Pray all in general, and sing every one in particular, with a devout heart, and a mouth filled with praise, to the honour of the crucified Jesus, to the Devil's confusion, to the exaltation of the holy cross, to the attaining the hope of eternal salvation, and firm faith in the hour of death. Let them pronounce, (I say) read, sing, sound, meditate, and think on those sweet and sacred words, more grateful to God than all the sweet perfumes imaginable. "We ought to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. Happy that soul which takes to heart the most bitter Passion of Christ Jesus, and daily exercises itself in the same by meditation, reading and prayer. Happy the soul which takes up the cross, renouncing all temporal things, and embracing all the adversity which it may meet with interiorly or exteriorly, suffering them all for Christ in patience and in silence. For to rejoice in tribulation, is indeed to glory in the cross for Christ's sake, as also to abstain from sensual pleasures, to fly honours, to abandon one's own will, and humbly to obey even unto death; to perform these things, is to imitate Christ on his cross, and truly to love him. For in this God discovers who loves him, and who are his, while not in thought only, but by daily mortification, they endeavour to conform themselves to his passion.

4. But who is disposed and proper to undergo such sufferings? Nay shall we happily find any ready to take up his cross? The way of the cross is a high and profound mystery, whereof all are not capable, yea very many do abhor and fly it, notwithstanding that it is the way which must lead us to eternal life.



O truly blessed cross, how much delight thou containest in thee, and how much strength thou affordest, against the snares of vice, and comfort in the sorrow of our hearts! O precious, beautiful, and saving tree of life, and blessed above all the trees of paradise! Thou art worthy to be honoured by the angels, to be revered by men, to be kissed by devout lips, and to be embraced with open arms. By thee we are set free, and are reconciled to God; whereas we were born the sons of wrath, and condemned slaves. By thee joy returns to the world, and weeping and lamentation inhabit hell. Thou art the salvation of the faithful, the glory of the Apostles, the shield of the martyrs, the praise of the confessors; the virgin's diadem, the widow's comfort, the old man's strength, the young man's discipline, the mirror of religious persons, and the refuge of the afflicted.

5. O Cross, brighter than the stars, fairer than the moon, more resplendent than the sun, illustrating the heavens, penetrating hell, putting the devils to flight, protecting man, terrifying the wicked, and rejoicing the virtuous; depressing the proud, and exalting the humble. O glorious Cross, admirable sign, unconquerable standard, impenetrable buckler! O delightful wood, worthy of all honour! Thou didst bear the King of Heaven, and didst support the Son of God, dying betwixt thy arms. By reference to thee, all the signs of the Cross, of what matter soever they be made, and in what place soever they are erected, are held in honour and reverence. Kings and princes, rich and poor, monks and priests, master and scholar, all ages, all sexes of the faithful, venerate, praise,

and bless thee in respect of Christ, who died upon thee and redeemed all men.

6. O blessed Cross ! because with thy signs all the sacraments of the church are administered ; priests are consecrated ; the sick are anointed ; the dead are guarded, and altars are adorned.

7. O most beautiful Cross ; consecrated by the body of Christ, and adorned with his sacred members, as with so many rich gems, dyed perfect red with his precious blood, pierced with nails, and deep planted in the ground. Thou stretchest out thy arms to the entire world, embracing all, and drawing all that is in heaven or earth to thyself.

8. O most noble Cross ! more strong than any armour of proof, subduing the world and the devil, and dreading no punishment, though of death itself. Thou art a most sure help and singular solace, in all straits and necessities, as well in life as death.

9. O most loving Cross ! forechosen by Christ, and borne upon his shoulders, up to the Mount Calvary, being never separated from him before he died ; by thee stood Mary the Mother of God, full of sorrow, together with the beloved disciple Saint John, and the pious Magdalene, &c.

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OF THE MANIFOLD FRUIT WHICH SPRINGS OUT OF THE  
MEMORY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S PASSION, AND OF GRA-  
TITUDE FOR THE SAME.

1. "Think diligently of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sustained of sinners such contradiction against

himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds." The memory of the Passion of Christ doth heap many blessings upon man; and by the frequent and intense thought of it, it doth more and more delight us, and creates a more vehement compunction in us. It is an incitement to divine love; a doctrine of patience, and comfort in tribulation. It puts dissoluteness to flight, it is the matter of holy compunction, and an exercise of internal devotion. It shuts out despair; gives a certain hope of remission of our sins, and is a profitable way to redeem time hitherto misspent. It is the best confidence at the hour of our death, lest a man might despair in himself. It appeaseth the divine wrath at the day of doom. It mitigates anxieties and troubles. It expels perverse thoughts, and represses carnal temptations. It teacheth humble subjection, and solaceth all corporal infirmities. It rejects worldly honours, and despiseth temporal abundance. It persuades voluntary poverty, makes us renounce our own wills and condemn superfluities. It heats our lukewarm conversation, and inflames us to fervent amendment. It obtains a more plentiful grace, and draws heavenly consolation upon us. It highly approves brotherly compassion. It disposeth us to divine contemplation, and augmenteth our future beatitude. It sweetens present pains, and prevents future punishments. And, finally, it greatly satisfieth for our daily offences. Yea, the Passion of Christ devoutly reflected on, frequently read, and inwardly digested, excels and abounds with these and many other blessings; which the soul dedicated to God, alienated from the world, affected to solitude, keeping a diligent watch over

her tongue, with an humble heart, and free from cares, best knows and experiences. That holy recollection exceedingly pleaseth God, rejoiceth the angels, edifies men, purifies our consciences, repels sloth, assuages sorrows, sweetens grief, represses anger, and bridles concupiscence. In truth, the Passion of Christ is a hidden treasure, the fulness of all virtues, the perfection of devotion, and the sum of all sanctity.

2. But, alas! how great is man's ingratitude, how sluggish is his heart; how negligent in calling to mind God's benefits! which yet are such, so great and precious, that they cannot be valued, much less can they be fully explicated. Return therefore to thine own heart, O servant of Christ, and leaving vain and fading joys, remember God's benefits, but especially meditate upon the passion of Christ frequently and seriously, that thou mayest be inflamed to love him more fervently. Then shalt thou be acceptable to God, and peaceable and quiet in mind, if thou art mindful of God's benefits, and devoutly renderest him thanks, of whom thou didst receive all thou hast; then thou employest thy time fruitfully, when thou sorrowest for thine own sins, and givest thanks for God's blessings. And even for this lament the most of all, that thou hast never yet worthily thanked God for his immense benefits bestowed upon thee. Nor art thou yet able to thank him sufficiently, though thou should even attend to no other thing than that alone. However thou oughtest endeavour to raise up thy heart to God, and as far as thou art able, to think upon his benefits with much attention.

3. O how much did he love thee, who showed thee so many wonders in the beauty of his creatures, that thou mightest always have matter ready at hand, out of the sensible things of this world, to render thanks to God, who created both thee and them. Study therefore to serve him with joy of heart and great reverence, even like the angels in heaven, so far as thou possibly canst in this mortal body, and in the condition of this present life, which in respect of future beatitude, ought rather to be termed the prison of the soul. For this reason God vouchsafed to become man, to suffer, to be crucified and to die, that by his cross, death, and passion, he might make a demonstration to thy heart how much he loved thee, for whom he suffered so much labour and pains. Be not ungrateful, therefore, or forgetful of all those things, which our Lord Jesus performed on earth, but make diligent reflection upon the wonderful works of God bestowed upon mankind with so liberal a hand. Who furthermore promised much greater blessings, and will certainly give them in heaven, provided that thou art thankful for his present blessings, and perseverest faithful in a little, even unto death.

4. Ingratitude is a great sin, and exceeding blameworthy both before God and man. For he is unworthy of divine benefits, who renders not God thanks with a devout heart. Nor doth he deserve greater blessings, who extols himself in any one, or negligently works with the one only talent bestowed upon him. For it is indeed very much that God deigns to bestow any thing at all on man. Nor ought we indeed esteem it little, that so great a Lord,

and so high above all, should be continually bestowing blessings on a poor and sinful man, who hath nothing worthy of giving back again in acknowledgment. Let therefore God be greatly loved, let his praise be always in our mouth, and let us accept of a little, as of a great matter. Let us return all to him by gratitude, and ascribe all to him who indeed gave us all, and conferred his benefits upon unworthy objects. Nor does he require any other return but that we would purely love him, and worthily praise him for all : that man might be blessed in Christ for ever, by loving him above all things, and by praising, honouring, and giving him thanks for ever. Amen.

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A PROFITABLE EXERCISE UPON THE PASSION OF  
CHRIST.

1. "I to my beloved, and his turning is towards me." A silent discourse is best liked amongst those who love, and whose counsel is secret ; such are used too betwixt the devout soul and Jesus crucified. And thus she saith : What I am, I am to my beloved, and besides him I care for no other. To him I desire to be attentive ; to him I wholly commit myself ; because he takes care of me, and doubtless his turning is towards me. I will not therefore have my eyes diverted any other way, but that my whole heart be turned upon my beloved, who suffered and was crucified for me ; yea, wholly wounded by love, and gored with wounds. I formerly sought him, a



little child, weeping in a manger, but now I covet to behold him hanging upon a cross. For as then I betook myself to him, to adore him a new born child, so now I betake myself to him, to lament him delivered up to death's form.

2. In both these manners he is my beloved, who was wholly given to me ; for me he was truly born, for me he truly suffered and was offered up. Sometimes he poured out tears of pity and compassion ; but now he gives his precious blood. Behold how he loved me who gave himself up to death to deliver me from death. Ought I not then by good reason to apply myself to seek him, to have him, to embrace him, whose unspeakable love is continually set upon me ? But then doth he more particularly turn unto me, when he excites me with all the motives of love, to celebrate the memory of his passion, and desires that I should return him thanks, and be wholly conformed unto him, because in nothing else did he so much labour for me. There did he open the mystery of our redemption unto me, and instructed me more fully to relish the things that belong to God. For his wisdom is above the reach of man, descending from above, teaching and persuading that we ought to glory in no other thing than in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein my salvation and redemption is entirely placed ; and by whom too the world is crucified to me and I to the world, so that I may confidently say unto him, "I to my beloved, and his turning is towards me." Many dear delights seem to me to be shut up in this word ; and though I do not comprehend them all, yet I despair not, at least, to be capable of some of them. Only let my beloved

turn unto me, and say what he pleases, sure I am, he shall not speak in vain.

3. Tell me, dear Jesus, the word of this mystery of thine, the word of thy cross and passion, which thou manifestly wroughtest in flesh ; for all are not capable of the word of the cross, which to some is a scandal, to others a folly, but to me the power and wisdom of God, the salvation of the world, and life everlasting. If any conceive otherwise of it, he is an infidel and a fool, and he shall have the judgment of God against him.

4. My passion, saith my beloved, is, as it were, a certain aromatical herb, of an admirable smell, and a most sweet taste ; which being carefully contemplated in the heart, and bruised, as it were, in a press, sends out a most delicious odour, which heals all the diseases and allurements of vice. In this shalt thou find the sovereign salve of thy soul, and an absolute solace in all adversities. But thou must frequently exercise thyself therein, and heartily endeavour to conform thyself thereto. For then shalt thou indeed begin to live religiously, and truly profit in virtue, and die with security, if thou dost imitate me in life and death by my cross and passion. But alas ! I am cast, as it were, out of mine own house, and thrown backwards. For I am excluded, and remain a great stranger to the hearts of many, who take no delight in my life, nor are moved and drawn by my passion ; neither does it go to their heart, as were fitting, but they are engaged in vain and superfluous things. Their thoughts are always bent upon their own miseries and wants, and they are very solicitous how they may escape temporal misfortunes,

but rarely or never think how much I have suffered for them. They are wretched and miserable, full of cares and inquietudes. They are able to suffer very little for me, but to have their own wills, they spare nothing; nay, to accomplish their own desires, they hardly feel any pain. Alas! such as those reap no fruit of my wholesome passion, but through too much self-love they incur the utter ruin of their souls. For if they desired to be perfectly cured and freed from their passions, they would run with all possible humility to the true remedies which are to be found in my passion, and so by the virtue and merit thereof they would grow strong, and learn to suffer all adversities patiently. None doth relish and find delight in my passion, save such only as leisurely and seriously meditate upon it, and ardently desire to imitate it. It is the tree of life to those that comprehend it; and they that follow it as they ought, shall be happy and blessed in that work. Because they shall obtain greater grace for the present, and a more exalted glory in the time to come.

5. Recollect thy senses then, and keep at home, shutting all noise out of doors. This done, take some short passage of the Passion, and consider it diligently according to the time and hour. For if it be called to mind every day, it will grow more and more delightful, and will strengthen and inflame the heart of the meditator. For all spiritual profit and perfection is found in it; but such favours are not tasted, save only by those that love and desire to emulate the same. To carnal and worldly men it seems bitter and hard, but it is sweet and delicious to the pious and devout. They who aspire to honours,

and to hoard up earthly treasures, and always seek their own advantages, are in no sort fitted to taste of the fruit of my passion, nor can they attain to its inward delight. But he who seeks to condemn the world, and to crucify his flesh with its vices and concupiscences, meets with exceeding great consolation, and feels singular devotion in my passion. For to such a soul I speak, saying: "My dove in the holes of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall." And to the same I often inculcate that, which sometimes I said to a certain disciple of mine: put thy hand hither, and feel the place of the nails, and be no more pusillanimous and fearful, but strong and courageous in imitating my passion. And his only secure refuge shall be in the open wound of my left side, if he endeavour to deny himself and strip himself of all affection to creatures. And he shall have so much more free passage to behold me in the deep wound of my love, by how much he is more free from all desire of human consolation. For I so draw all his affections to myself, that he thinks not of himself while he feels my wounded heart. Discharge thyself therefore of all worldly employments, throw away from thee all vain solitudes; dispatch all friends and acquaintances far from thee, keep thyself pure and free from all interests, that thou mayest enter to thy beloved by the door of his wounded side. Bring in such affections with thee as the holy women had, who beheld me hanging upon the cross, and bewailed me most bitterly as their only child. For so thou mayest truly know and taste what effect my passion hast in the heart of a lover, if thou hast the bowels of a loving

mother; if thou judgest from thy very heart that nothing ought to be loved like me : because the great measure of compassion ariseth out of the large measure of love.

6. Thy words, my dear Lord Jesus Christ, do singularly well please me. And therefore I beseech thee, though I be not able perfectly to imitate thee in all things, grant me grace to take some little pity and compassion of thee. I will therefore raise up the eye of my heart to thee, O my Lord and Master, who hangest naked upon the cross. I will attentively contemplate all thy wounds, and all the stripes of thy body, and embrace and kiss thy wounded hands, thy pierced feet, together with the nails that pierced them. This done, I will enter into the open wounds of thy side as into the chamber of my Beloved. There will I securely live, sheltered from all that might hinder or hurt me, and there repose in a happy quiet, in a heavenly peace. I will fear none of the injuries which may be done me, nor none of the things which may be said or thought contemptuously of me; so that thou abidest and remainest with me. I will put my confidence in thee, and I will dwell day and night in thy side. Thou art a more faithful friend than all the world besides. Thou art a stronger wall of defence than all the hosts of angels. And therefore I must never be unmindful of thee, but as far as my poverty and infirmity may cause, I will call to mind thy most bitter passion in sorrow of heart. Nor yet can all the creatures together sufficiently and worthily think, speak, or write of thee, though they should all of them apply themselves to that alone. For that thou,

O God, the Creator of all things, shouldst deign to become man, and to die for man, far exceeds all human thought and comprehension.

7. I beseech thee, therefore, O Lord, to look with the eye of mercy upon me a miserable sinner, frequently to visit me, to cleanse me with tears, and bruise and purify my heart by compunction, and inwardly illuminate it with thy unspeakable grace; that thou mayest renew and kindle the diligent meditation of thy passion in me whom thou hast redeemed by thy precious blood. Grant me grace devoutly to profit by it, and to draw the wholesome remedies of all my passions from it. God grant that it may go more deeply to my heart, than hitherto it hath done; and that it may so affect and instruct me, as it hath often inflamed and made contrite many of thy saints: to the end that the similitude of thy death may result out of my life by the operation of my mind and the mortification of my body: and that I may use that memorable word of the apostle, "I am nailed to the cross of Christ." And preach that other, which speaks no less love, against all the carnal and vainly babbling wise men of the world: "From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me, for I bear the marks of our Lord Jesus in my body." The blessed apostle Paul bore thy glorious and precious marks in his body, when, besides the daily memory of thy passion, he rejoiced with all the affection of his soul, to be outwardly afflicted and upbraided for thy name's sake. And all the troubles and afflictions that he felt either in body or mind he esteemed light and tolerable through the amorous consideration of thy wounds: and thereupon he



exhorted all thy faithful lovers, saying: "Let us always carry about with us in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies." Study zealously now, O my soul, to perform this, especially at this time when the church celebrates the venerable memory of our Saviour's passion: and always direct the eye of thy contemplation thither with a mournful heart and devout attention, where thou knowest Jesus suffered the greatest torments for thy sake. Say thou affectionately with the spouse, being continually mindful of thy beloved Lord crucified by love: "I to my beloved, and his turning is towards me."

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OF SEVEN MOST REMARKABLE POINTS TO BE THOUGHT  
UPON IN CHRIST'S PASSION.

"Attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Amongst all the benefits of God bestowed upon mankind, the passion of Christ is the greatest, and begets most compunction in the heart, and therefore the mind of man ought to be prompt to keep in memory so great a benefit, and diligently think upon the passion of Christ; because this is pleasing to God, and sovereign to him that thinks of it: for all his wounds are cures of our souls, and the cutting blows of the whip are signs of the divine love, and our soul's purgations. O what thanks am I bound to render to Christ for every stripe and cruel wound, which he suffered in his blessed body for me a vile sinner.

2. Consider therefore first who it is that suffers these things. Secondly, by whom he endures them. Thirdly, what great things he suffers. Fourthly, for whom he suffers them. Fifthly, for what space of time he suffers. Sixthly, in what place he suffers. Seventhly, in what parts of his body he suffers. For if these seven notable things be considered in order, they contribute very much to inward compunction. Because when thou lookest upon the person suffering, none is more worthy, none greater, none more holy, none more excellent. Because it is the very Son of God that suffers, the only begotten of God the Father, the first and only born of the Virgin mother, conceived by the Holy Ghost, full of grace and sanctity, famous for signs and wonders, conversing in the world without sin, he is the true Lamb of God, without spot, prefigured in the law, foretold by the prophets, desired by many kings and just men, sent by his heavenly father into the world to suffer for the world's salvation, humbled of his own accord to the cross and death itself, and offered up to God upon the altar of the cross for our offences. He then such and so great, high priest, and true Bishop of our souls, holy, innocent, immaculate, the king of kings, Lord of all things, the Creator of Angels, the Redeemer of mankind, refuses not to be despised, taken, bound, whipt, crucified, to die and be buried, as the sacred text of his passion declares.

3. O lamentable spectacle to all that pass by the way of this life, outwardly exposed to every one's view: and inwardly proposed to all the faithful as an example for them to imitate. I beseech thee diligently, O my soul, to weigh every word and wound

described in the passion, since all was done for thy salvation. Again, they put a high commendation upon Christ's charity; and teach us how to keep patience in all tribulations. For it is most clearly evident, that in comparison of Christ's sorrows and reproaches, the difficulties and afflictions which thou sufferest, are nothing. It is therefore good for thee to turn thy eye often this way, and to seek for solace in the painful passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to live like a dove in the holes of the rock, and to lament his sufferings. For Jesus will more comfort thee, by the meditation of his blessed passion, than all the world with all its honours and riches. In the passion of Jesus Christ, thou wilt find matter of edification, and purification of conscience; but in the love of worldlings there is but a short pleasure, and the conscience remains defiled. For all that is not of God, is vanity, and ought to be esteemed as nothing. But the passion of Christ, is a quickening word, and an effectual lesson for our instruction, as also to inflame and purify us. It is sharper than any sword, and smites the very bottom of the heart. For it reproaches our negligence, mollifies our hardness, breaks down our heart into compassion, and frequently melts to tears. Because the devout soul is struck with compunction, and is, as it were, interiorly wounded, as often as the passion of Christ is read, or the cross is beheld, or Jesus Christ, crucified, is named. And this is the great solace of the soul, if thinking of the passion of Christ, we feel that sorrow in our heart, which he suffered, and keenly felt in his body.

4. Now, therefore, attend, and behold Christ as

though he were present, while he so much suffers. In the first place consider the dignity of the person, and conceive a vehement sorrow that God is treated so contumeliously in his flesh. Behold how he that is the highest above all, is depressed under all : he that is most noble dishonoured and abused. The most beautiful is foully spit upon—the most wise is derided—the most powerful is bound—the most innocent is scourged—the most holy is crowned with thorns—the most mild is buffeted—the most rich impoverished—the most bountiful is despoiled—the most chaste is stript naked—the most sacred is blasphemed—he that is the best is blamed—the most learned reputed a fool—the most lovely is hated—the most true is denied—the most sweet is presented with gall to drink—the blessed is cursed—the peaceable is molested—the just is accused—the innocent is condemned—the physician is wounded—the Son of God is crucified—the immortal is put to death—the Lord and Master is hung upon the cross to redeem the servant. O unheard of crime ! O horrid and execrable malice of the Jews ! which yet God turns to so great advantage through his most pious mercy and sufferance—namely, to the salvation of all the faithful. For from thence the light of the world is extinguished for a short space, from thence the eternal light shines in the hearts of the believers. And when life dies for a time, then eternal death as to the elect is slain. In a word, the devil is subdued and confounded by the passion of Christ—hell is conquered—the thief is converted—the world is redeemed—the souls of the just are delivered out of limbus—heaven's gates are opened

—the ruins of the angels are repaired, and eternal salvation wrought by Christ, is published to the world.

5. Secondly, consider by whom Christ endured these pains. Verily, by his own nation, by his people peculiarly beloved, by his kindred according to the flesh ; by the Israelites, Abraham's children, whom he formerly enriched with such great benefits, heightened with such rare privileges, and instructed with so many precepts, laws, and ceremonies, above all other nations ; by men to whom he had given the best part of the earth, for whom he came into the world, and whom he desired to save ; by these, then, whom he had so wonderfully obliged and enriched by his benefits, Christ is unjustly despised, maliciously accused, causelessly afflicted, and in the end is condemned to a most infamous death. They were not mindful of the multitudes of his mercies from the beginning of the world, nor of the wonderful works which he shewed unto them, even after they had grievously offended in many things ; they reflected not how abjectly he had lived among them—how sovereignly he had taught them—how he loved poverty and condemned riches—fled honours—made choice of abject and simple persons : of the many sick he cured—restored sight to the blind—cast out devils—healed the leprous—and being famous for many other wonders, proved himself God by his works ; and by suffering our necessities and wants, declared himself to be true man. He deserved not contumely, but glory at their hands, for these benedictions and wonderful works effected by his divine power ; and was justly to have received from all men, not punishment but gratitude

—not hatred but love—not derision but honour. But, alas! the perverse and incredulous remain ungrateful for all his benefits, and for many blessings they returned many injuries. Yea, to add to their malice, they incited many others to the same crime, and with threats and clamours they demanded the death of the innocent. Hence the people are stirred into a commotion by the persuasion of the princes, and the instigation of the priests; they are all against Christ, the old and young make loud and horrid outcries: “Away with him, away with him, let him be crucified.” All their former praise and honour is turned into execrations—the applause and songs of the children of the Jews into the howlings of ravenous wolves. No age was absent—no sex was silent—no state or condition was wanting; all the depraved hearts of the Jews and Gentiles are unanimous, and conspired together to have Jesus delivered up to death, and to hang his innocent body upon the cross. And thence all of them contracted the guilt of eternal damnation in the death of Christ; being, in very deed, bloody parricides, and cruel and merciless murderers of a God, sparing the Son of God in nothing, but committing all the mischief they could devise against him; feigning false accusations, and perverting all his famous actions. O admirable clemency of God! O the inestimable patience of Christ! which could not be moved with such multitudes of injuries, nor yet be overcome by pains; affording in this an admirable example, and a most sovereign consolation to all that suffer injuries, that they might at least endure flying words, who are not yet in a capacity to sustain sharp blows.



6. Thirdly, thou art to consider what great things Christ suffers, and what multitudes of wrongs are cast upon him. For first it is evident, by the testimony of the gospel, that he was sold by his own disciple for a small sum of money; after that he was delivered to his enemies with a kiss of feigned peace. The priests sharply rebuke him; the high priest terms him a blasphemer; the Scribes and Pharisees defame him; the ancients of the city accuse him; the ministers present him to the judge; Herod contemns and scoffs him; Pilate judges him to die; the officers apprehend and bind him; the soldiers whip and crown him with thorns: the servants upbraid, spit in his face, and buffet him; the maid servants have him in abomination; so that they said to Peter, "Thou art indeed one of his company, and thou wert with Jesus of Galilee." Hardly is there any found so vile and miserable who rejoiceth not at the punishments inflicted upon Jesus. O sorrow beyond all sorrows! Ah, poor and humble Jesus, who among the sons of men hadst no comforter, no helper! His acquaintances forsake him; his friends stand afar off; weep they could, but assist him they could not; Jesus is left alone amidst his most cruel enemies; little and great sue for his death. With clamour and confusion he is led without the city, laden with his cross, stript of his garments, hung up naked between two thieves, pierced with nails, presented with vinegar and gall to drink. Grievous are the impious words, more grievous the cruel blows, but most grievous of all are the horrid torments of the cross. They exercised those so ignominious tortures upon his most delicate, holy,

pure, and virginal body ; so that from the soles of his feet to the top of his head there was nothing left entire, but he appeared as a leprous person to all that beheld him. See therefore now, and consider if there be any sorrow like to the sorrow which thy God suffers for thee. Count, if thou canst, all the blows, all the wounds, all the stripes, all the reproaches, all the ignominies, which are heaped upon him. Bear a part with him by a compassionate heart ; with him, who with an equal patience suffers all these indignities. Write them down in the table of thy heart for an eternal memorial ; and in all thy tribulations address the eyes of thy soul to Jesus hanging upon the cross. For this crucifying was the most ignominious, bitter and grievous to Christ of all the pains which were inflicted upon him. It was also most sensible to him in respect of his friends who stood afar off, and bitterly lamented ; because he reputed their grief and sorrow his own. It was yet most cruel in respect of his enemies who derided and upbraided him, rejoicing in his destruction, nor were they touched with any pity at his so grievous pains and torments. Behold now thou hast heard what great punishments, and that by what great multitudes of people, he suffered, with whom all Christians ought most justly to take part and compassion. If any should see his father, or some dearest friend of his tormented with such pains in his presence, and to be hung upon a public gibbet before his door, would he not straight faint and fall down with grief, as a person quite overcome with afflictions ? Much more then ought the Passion of Christ to pierce thy very bowels, and to excite thee

to a most wholesome sorrow. Endeavour therefore carefully to banish all carnal love from thy heart, and to shut out all mirth, that thou mayest deserve to be numbered amongst the devout lovers of Christ, who daily exercise themselves upon our Saviour's Passion; and do so draw all his sufferings into their hearts, that they little or nothing weigh or esteem their own injuries or wrongs. Of whom the blessed apostle St. Paul, a lover of our Saviour's passion, saith: "Think this in yourselves, which also in Christ Jesus, who humbled himself, taking the form of a servant upon him, and was made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

7. Fourthly, you shall consider for whom Christ suffered, and why God would endure so painful a death. And it was even for our sins, which we contracted from our first parents, and which also we committed by our own particular iniquity, of what age, state, degree, and office soever we may be. For all, saith the apostle, offended, and need the glory of God, let us be Jews or Gentiles—slaves or freemen—rich or poor—kings or princes—clergymen or lay people—priests or doctors—prelates or subjects: all, I say, were begotten by nature the sons of Adam, the children of wrath. But we are delivered by the Passion of Christ; we are purified by his baptism, and we are saved by his death from eternal damnation. Whether, then, we say the Passion of Christ, the blood of Christ, the cross of Christ, or death of Christ, it is all one and the same thing, and they altogether profit us to salvation, because by believing in Christ and loving Christ we are incorporated and united to him. For the head suffered for the

members, it sorrowed for the members, it prayed upon the cross for the members, and obtained pardon. Christ therefore died for all, that by suffering a temporal death he might subdue an eternal death, and by sin he might condemn sin; that is, by the pains of his Passion he might pay all the debts of our sins. Hence also St. Peter, commending the grace of Christ and the merit of his passion, saith: "Christ died once for our sins, the just for the unjust," that he might offer us up to God, mortified indeed in flesh, but quickened in spirit. Hence we read in the Apocalypse, that the souls of the saints fell down before the throne of God, with great thanksgiving, and they sung praises before the Lamb for their redemption, saying: Thou redeemest us to God with thy blood, out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation; and thou madest us a kingdom, and priests to our God. Hence also it is, that our holy Mother the Church especially directs this petition to Christ, in the Saints' Litanies, when she prayeth for divers necessities and dangers, saying: "By thy cross and passion, by thy death and burial, deliver us, O Lord." For such a prayer is most grateful to God, and gives a greater confidence of obtaining pardon through the merits of Christ's passion. The Passion is also the treasure of the Church, which can never be drained nor dried up, being of infinite virtue and dignity. For hereby all debts are paid, all sins are remitted, and the kingdom of heaven is promised and given to penitent sinners, which was shut up for many thousand years' space. O most sweet reconciliation to appease the divine wrath! O most worthy oblation to recover lost grace! O most

plentiful satisfaction, to wash out all the spots of the sins of Adam, in whom all mankind offended and fell. And whereas Christ found none free from sin, therefore he came to redeem all men, he satisfied for all men out of charity. Pity moved him to it; his divinity enabled him, and by his humanity he accomplished the work of our redemption. Whence blessed Saint Paul saith, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself: for Christ's sake we beseech you be reconciled to God." Now you have heard and understood for whom Christ suffered, and the cause why he was pleased to suffer this death, which was for all mankind, of every age and sex of the race of Adam.

8. Fifthly, consider for how long a time Christ suffered, and how long he continued in torments, for this demonstrates the greatness of his patience; and yields a wonderful comfort to the weak and sorrowful. Observe and diligently peruse all the evangelical history, and thou shalt clearly discover, that all the life of Christ, from his nativity to the end of his thereof, was spent in great poverty, in persecution and temptation, in labour and weariness, and in patiently enduring the contempt and scorn of the wicked, and was finally consummated in the ignominy of the cross; so that he past no time exempt from tribulation, as long as he lived in this world. But if we consider the certain day and hour of his passion, his sadness (through apprehension of the sorrows which hung over his head, and his future death) began from the eve of his last most sacred supper; when, while his disciples were yet at supper, he foretold them, that the same night he was to be delivered

by one of them into the hands of sinners; and it continued till after the hour of his burial, yea even till the third day when he rose from the dead; for then he appeared living, joyful and glorious to his disciples. The sin of man therefore was enormous, which could only be expiated by so many sorrows, in so long a time; and for which it was necessary that the Son of God should be crucified and die. And because human frailty is great, and prone to evil, even from youth; and is furthermore led into sin by sundry occasions and temptations at all times and hours, as well by night as day, as well ignorantly as knowingly (so that scarcely one day or hour passeth, without sin or offence to God), therefore, lest the sinner might be put to desperation by the weight and number of his crimes, our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered for us all, and that most violent pains, for a long space, and at sundry hours, by labouring in his sufferings all day and night, for the offences of the sons of men, yea many times by the effusion of his own precious blood. Then also, by those divers times of sufferances, did he fulfil the seven canonical hours; to his heavenly Father's glory, not by singing but by suffering and praying for us. All religious persons therefore instructed by this example of Christ, ought daily to pay their seven hours to God; because Christ offered himself up to God a holocaust, in odour of sweetness upon the altar of the cross: and hanging as a chosen victim amidst the brambles of sin, he was sacrificed for Isaac, that is, for all the elect. Whereupon Saint Peter, writing to the faithful in Christ, to exhort them to gratitude, saith: "You are not redeemed



with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation of your father's tradition, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as with that of an immaculate lamb." Our Redeemer then, our Lord Jesus Christ, chose to sustain so many pains, and for so long a time, in his most precious body, to blot out the handwriting of our damnation, to excite us to the rigour of strict penance, and to give us an example of patience all the days of our lives. And truly we have all of us great need of patience, as long as we live in this miserable world full of temptations. For none is secure from the snares of the devil, and the danger of sin, not so much as one day or hour, be he established in what place, degree or office soever, unless he be every hour looked upon and protected by God's grace and mercy. Amidst all these miseries and dangers we must chiefly betake ourselves to our Saviour's passion, cover ourselves and repose under the tree of the cross, as under the shadow of the divine protection; and frequently with great attention meditate upon the patience of Christ, because he hath a most sovereign power, to mitigate and sweeten all the bitterness of our sufferings, and lessen our grievances, whencesoever they arise.

9. Study, therefore, patiently to suffer all the adversities of this life, and to take patience instead of armour by the example of Christ and of all his saints. Complain not of the length of time, nor of the greatness of thy afflictions, but call to mind that Christ suffered greater things and much longer for thee, and therefore it is but just and reasonable that thou shouldst follow the same way. Because by suffer-

ing for Christ, you greatly merit and shall obtain great blessings thereby. For first you honour Christ more highly when you receive any afflictions from the hand of God—you glad the angels, who rejoice in heaven for your sufferings. You edify your neighbour by bearing injuries patiently. You confound the devil, if being hurt and contemned, you give thanks. You double your crown, because here below you receive a greater grace, and in heaven a higher glory. And though all present labour is but small, and this life is short, yet the future reward of it is ample, and the repose infinite. In very deed you become as often a martyr, as you do freely suffer any pain for Christ. Apprehend not then God to be your enemy if you be molested and depressed in this world: but rather rejoice that you are humbled and afflicted here below, that you may be glorified with God eternally. For it often happens that prosperity hurts us more than adversity, and flattery sooner deceives us than bitter taunts. Faint not, therefore, in your tribulations, for the name and love of Christ, but suffer all patiently with an humble heart, as Christ and all his saints did, who by suffering torments subdued their foes. For by suffering adversities a man becomes better, brighter than gold, clearer than glass, more pure from the spots of vice, and more perfect in virtue, more acceptable to Christ, more like to the angels, stronger than the enemy, more amiable to our friends. One becomes more cautious in the custody of one's self, more prone to compassion, more fitted to humility, more prudent to behave one's self discreetly, more fervent in prayer, more addicted to heavenly

things, and better secured against hell. These are the happy fruits of patience, which do most shine in Christ's most bitter passion. And all these things are proposed to us to imitate. For this most sacred passion far surpasses all the sufferings of the saints, as being most bitter in sorrow, most profound in humility, most excellent in charity, most perfect in obedience, most strong in patience, most innocent in purity, most wholesome in profit, most worthy in merit, most efficacious in its effects, most sufficient in point of satisfaction for all men, most proper to appease God's wrath, most graciously reconciling, a most acceptable offering, most plentifully redeeming, most full of mysteries, most odoriferous with the sweets of all virtues, and far to be preferred before all arts, sciences, and medicines. In fine, the Passion of our Redeemer is so great, so high, so profound, so sweet, so exciting to compunction, and so amorous, so fervent, so consoling, so delicious, so full of perfection, that it can by no words be commended to the full, nor be expressed even by the tongues of the angels; but it is still new and lively, always refreshing, comforting, instructing, and inflaming; especially such as seek their solace in the wounds of Christ, with the absolute contempt of all worldly things.

10. You shall note all the places where our Saviour Christ suffered pains or contumelies for your sake, for he prayed thrice on Mount Olivet; there he sweat blood through sadness and fear, and having first prayed, he perfectly resigned himself up to his Father's blessed will. In the garden he was sought and found by the Jews, from whom he fled

not, but went to meet them. By Judas he was betrayed, and kissed with treacherous lips. He is taken and bound by the armed guards. He is dragged and violently led to the city, by a wicked company of soldiers, in the dark night, with torches and lanterns, as though he had been some infamous thief : and is kept with great caution, lest he might escape out of their hands, or be otherwise rescued by any. In Anna's house he is first examined, and interrogatories put to him concerning his doctrine and his disciples. And having made a modest and good answer, he receives a rude blow upon the cheek, by one of the officers. In the house of Caiphas the high priest (where a multitude was gathered together against him) he suffers many injuries and scorns. They blindfold him, they foully spit upon him, they smite him, and proclaim him guilty of death. Early in the morning, he is publicly led through all the streets to Pilate's palace with his hands fettered ; and is violently accused of transgressing the law and seducing the people. Then he is sent over to Herod's Consistory, by whom he was derided, clothed with a white garment, reputed a fool, and despatched back to Pilate. He is everywhere scorned, everywhere upbraided ; nowhere secure, nowhere in quiet, being made odious and abominable to all men. From abroad his ears are filled with clamours : within he endures sorrow and grief. And having received many cruel blows and wounds, he is led out of the city with a contumelious cross upon his shoulders, as a person not worthy to live, and he is hung naked thereon upon Mount Calvary, betwixt two thieves. And all things being fulfilled which were foretold of

him, he was reverently buried by Joseph and Nicodemus, two just men, in the bowels of the earth, that is, in "a new monument cut out of the rock," and many holy women bewail him with floods of tears. Behold how many stations Christ made in his passion, how frequently he spilled his precious blood in the same: how many reproaches and wounds he endured, to sanctify his people, and purge those infected places wherein men frequently transgress and offend God.

11. And who, alas, is able to count all the iniquities which are yet committed in many places, as well in public as in private—in the houses and the streets—in gardens, villages, mountains, valleys, fields, woods—in courts and earthly palaces? Christ is not there—there is no moan made there for the death of a Saviour: but vanity of vanities, mirth and laughter in Herod's banquets, who was accompanied with his princes. Woe be to them that put themselves at such a distance from him who redeemed them. They turn their face to the world, and their back to God. Yet our pious Lord never ceased to cry after such, and to call his lost sheep to repentance. For he left an excessive hope of his mercy to man, in that he so mildly suffered all the sorrows and torments of his most bitter passion: in those places especially, where he was publicly exhibited and loaded or overwhelmed with injuries. And therefore to expiate man's malice, and to purge those filthy places, he was most cruelly tormented by many in his most sacred body. And he who of old inflicted a curse upon the world for the sins of man, now promises remission of sins to all

true penitents by the effusion of his own most precious blood.

12. Furthermore, by the preaching of his word, he destroyed the idols of the Gentiles, and the power of the devils—he threw down the altars and names of the false gods, and instead of the sacrilegious rites of the pagans and the Jews' calves, he instituted a new and true sacrifice of his precious body to be celebrated in many places. Hence he caused temples and altars to be consecrated in divers places of the world in honour of his name and of the saints, that the faith of the Christian might remain firm and constant, and that the divine worship might resound in hymns and praises, and to enrich and adorn the place of the habitation of his glory, and to illustrate the house of prayer with most precious relics, he placed therein the devout and excellent signs of his passion for a perpetual memorial, and directed the holy cross as a triumphant title of his conquest over death—and as a pledge of a truce and peace betwixt God and man—and as an ark of brass against the power of the devil.

13. It is but just, therefore, that Christ, who suffered, should be preached, praised, and magnified in all places, by all his faithful servants—by little and great—poor and rich—wise and simple—strong and weak—superiors and subjects—all over the world, with joyful hearts and by the voice of all nations: and that his name should be extolled far above all names in heaven and earth, by reason of the confusion and torments inflicted on him in many places by sinners. You also, moved out of pure devotion, on this holy day called Good Friday, ought



to imprint in your heart all the stations of our Saviour's passion, and to search over all Jerusalem in spirit; frequently to raise up your eyes to the picture of your crucified Lord, and to behold, and inwardly consider all the sacred wounds of Christ Jesus, observing with inward compassion how grievous and numerous they were. And then humbly crave pardon, and beseech him mercifully to remit the offences you have committed against his gracious goodness in what time or place soever. You may also visit the altars of the church, and fall prostrate upon the ground before them, kissing the pavement or the steps thereof, in remembrance of our Saviour's blood poured out upon the ground.

14. Again, for the honour and love of Christ, you ought to reverence all the places of the holy church consecrated to God's service, as monasteries and hospitals, wheresoever a religious life and God's service is performed, and to rejoice in their well-doing, and take compassion of their adversities, that you may be made partaker of all the good works which are performed there to God's praise and glory: for he shall quickly obtain pardon of God, who firmly purposeth to mend his life, being first truly sorrowful for his sins. He also shall obtain a great confidence in the divine assistance, who takes the passion of Christ into his aid on every occasion and petition, and repositeth more confidence in the merits of Christ and in the suffrages of the saints than in his own virtue and industry. For if our actions be strictly discussed, they are hardly ever totally pure. And therefore it is always necessary to betake ourselves to the remedy of an humble confession, and to God's

mercy : and to fix the whole hope of our salvation in Christ, who alone is wholly perfect. And he is powerful enough quickly and perfectly to cure all our imperfections, and to afford a more plentiful grace to the humble and contrite of heart.

15. Seventhly and lastly, you are to observe, and with much grief to consider, in what members Christ suffered ; and what bitter pains he endured for us in every joint of his body, and in all his five senses. O what cruel stripes he sustained in the whipping : how many thousand wounds were inflicted upon him, how often he was smitten again in the same place, and how sharp and sensible that was to him, which yet he endured in silence. He made no opposition or defence with his hand, nor did he withdraw his foot or any other member from the blows, but freely and of his own accord, he abandoned his whole body to those that whipped him, that he might fully satisfy for the sins of all men. For as it was revealed to a certain religious man in a vision, as soon as Christ received a blow, he presently offered it up to his Father for us, out of pure love, beseeching him to pardon our offences. For that dearly beloved child never once murmured against his father that had exposed him to such great torments. He threatened not those that rudely tortured him ; he showed no anger against those that foully spit upon him ; he cursed not those who falsely accused him. Nay, he rather condoled, excused, pitied, and prayed for them that he might be pardoned : saying, “ Father, forgive them : for they know not what they do.”

16. But what is the cause of so great pains, and so immense sorrow ? Truly the multitude of the

sins of men who most frequently transgress in many of their members by their five senses, and grievously offend God, for alas, with a rash boldness they gave over the members of their body (which they ought to employ in God's service, and with them produce many good works) to divers vanities and wicked pleasures, banishing all fear of God, and so by sin they become the slaves of vice, and members and vessels of the devil. Wherefore Christ the Son of God, taking pity of men, and desiring to save sinners, and to free them from the snares of Satan, received and endured grievous tortures in his most holy body, that by his corporal pains and dolours in his five senses, he might cure our souls, and teach us that all the delights of the flesh, which fight against the spirit, ought to be subdued and mortified; lest God might eternally punish man for his sins, who, forsaking the chief good, adhered to creatures, our pious Lord Jesus took upon him this pain and this temporal death of the flesh for our faults, he being altogether without fault, that he might appease his Father's wrath and deliver us from eternal pains.

17. But now turn the eyes of your heart to every member mangled with wounds: and pour out tears moved by the love of pious compassion. Begin from the sole of his foot, and ascend up, even to the crown of his head, for alas, Jesus' whole body is tortured with most bitter pains. Verily, if you yourself suffered the like, or otherwise lay sick on your bed of some languishing disease, would you not take it in good part if some friend should condole with you? And on the contrary, would it not trouble you if he carelessly passed by without regarding your pains?

Behold our Lord Jesus, then, who suffered for you, who was wounded and died for you, and bestow a sigh at least upon all his sorrows, if you cannot produce a hearty lamentation. When blessed St. Stephen was stoned many devout and faithful people made a great mourning upon him. And yet behold one here greater than St. Stephen, yea infinitely exceeding all the Saints, hangs upon the tree of the cross, laden with wounds, and therefore every faithful person ought most justly condole with him, but much more the devoutly religious persons who have forsaken the world. In the first place, therefore, observe how our Saviour suffered, and how sorely he was wounded in his most pure and fair feet, with which he often wearily travelled while he preached God's word, with which he walked upon the sea, and passed over it without boat or barge, or help of man; for by the same virtue and power by which he created all things, he was also able to cause the winds and sea to obey him, and be ready at his service. But, alas, what a wonderful change is this, and how incomprehensible is God's disposition herein, that the author of all created things, and the prime physician of our souls and bodies, who caused many lame and sick people suddenly to walk, should now be so cruelly wounded in his feet, and have them so rudely pierced with nails, that he can neither walk or move himself, but like a miserable thief is nailed to the cross. The innocent Christ (who according to the Prophet, "frees the fettered by the feet," enlightens the blind, raiseth the fallen, and loves the just) is thus nailed by both his feet! And why this, I pray? Verily, to the end that he might loose us

from the shackles of our sins, and that he might wash out the stains of our feet, which they so often contracted in pursuing the objects of their criminal desires.

18. Ah, how heinously they offend who spurn at the poor, who go in pomp, and who by a giddy lightness and loose behaviour, scandalize many. Woe be to those who, through tediousness of doing good and want of devotion, seek their consolation in external things; for if such were but fixed with one nail of the fear of God, they would keep themselves retired at home, and either meditate upon the passion of Christ, or read some passages of holy scripture, whereby being stirred up to compunction, they would be inflamed with the love of Christ, and thereby condemn all worldly adversity and prosperity. Blessed are their feet who stand continually disposed to hear God's word; who, leaving vanities, makes haste to the Church, and frequently apply themselves to prayer; who restrain their senses from wandering abroad, that they may be able to pronounce, with a good conscience, I hindered my feet from walking in the ways of the wicked, that I may keep thy words. Blessed are the feet which walk in the ways of Jesus, even to the cross; and rather choose to stay and to lament with Mary, than to go to a banquet, or be present at some idle and vain amusement.

19. Christ also suffered, and was cruelly wounded in his holy hands, wherewith he gave many blessings, and touched and cured the infirm; with which, too, he took bread and broke it; consecrated his own body and gave it to his disciples for their consolation. But, O God, full of piety, why dost thou

permit thy holy hands to be pierced with so much pain, and bathed with blood, thou who didst create the heavens without labour, and beautifiedst the earth with such grace and comeliness? O holy, powerful, and immortal God! behold the hands which framed the first man in paradise, without fault or imperfection; but now, alas, they are stricken through by the perfidious Jews' wicked hands with nails; and in the sight of thy friends they are stretched out upon the cross, which was reputed a curse and a great scandal by all men. But, O good and sweet Jesus, thou wast content most patiently to suffer this injury and violence for our first parents and their posterity, that thou mightest cancel and destroy the handwriting of the decree that was against us, and wash out with thy precious blood original sin, which was contracted by tasting of the forbidden tree, that whence death entered by sin, thence salvation might spring and return by means of thy punishment, and therefore didst thou stretch out thy blessed arms upon the wood of the cross to blot out the offences of all sinners, and, moved by charity, thou didst plead for us with thy wounded hands.

20. O how grateful and acceptable was that oblation which thou offered for us, when thou, most loving Jesus, the only Son of God, didst offer thyself up for a perpetual sacrifice, to pacify the anger of thy Almighty Father, whom we have all grievously offended, from which we have no ability to be delivered of ourselves, save only by the intervention of thy sacred passion, and by thy temporal death, upon the tree of the cross, whence sprung our sanc-



tification and redemption, in the purchase of eternal salvation. Observe here the grievousness of our sins and the bitterness of Christ's wounds : the force of his charity, and his suppliant suit for his enemies, and finally his benignity and mildness to all that were contrary to him. Christ prayed most frequently, and taught his disciples to pray : sometimes upon his knees, sometimes with his eyes lifted up to heaven, yet never was he observed to have prayed more fervently nor more zealously than he prayed now for his enemies with hands stretched out, feet nailed, and all the members of his body extended and wounded on the altar of the cross. For then he poured out a most sweet prayer to his eternal Father, that he would pardon those that sinned against him. Christ therefore received most deep wounds in his hands, that he might abate the malice of man, who is too prone to anger, and too slow to do good to his enemies, thereby instructing all men to do good and suffer evil : for it is reputed a great matter amongst men, if the offended render not evil for evil, and like for like according to Talion's Law, but Christ renders prayers for injuries. Be careful then, O thou poor, frail, and vicious man, that thou do not hurt or injure any, either by sinister words, or by bad works, for whom Christ suffered and died : because every soul that firmly believes in him, and keeps his commandments is precious in his sight. And it is but just, that you should conceive a good opinion of your neighbour, and hope for the better : because he is either good already, or may quickly by grace be made better. Show therefore your charity, and beseech God the Father, that he who is now

your adversary may amend and be embraced as a brother. And if he have wronged you, freely pardon him, for the love of Jesus Christ, who spared you in many things, for he was pious and merciful to all men : he despised not the poor : he abhorred not the leprous : he derided not the infirm : but comforted the sorrowful, appeased the wrathful ; patiently endured the perverse, received the repentant ; instructed the ignorant ; defended the innocent ; strengthened the weak in faith ; and shewed charity to all sorts of persons, and which is yet more to be admired, being all covered with stripes and wounds, he ceased not for all that to pray. Behold how Christ, by bearing with the wicked, and comforting the just, afforded lessons of excellent doctrine in his passion, as well to the strong as to the infirm ; and drew unto him as well his enemies as his friends with the two arms of his charity, not condemning any for their faults, so they desire to be reconciled to God : to forgive all those that may have trespassed against them, and withal to exercise mutual charity.

21. Christ suffered also very painfully in his most blessed head (as in the principal part of his body), for all the inferior parts which we are, who believe in him, and adhere to him by faith and charity. For every one of the faithful, as a lively and sound member, ought in heart to suffer with Christ in all his pains, and as it were to be wounded with him ; for indeed, the member that suffers and condole not with the wounded and diseased head, is either rotten or totally void of feeling. If you be then a member of Christ, and live of and relish his spirit, be atten-

tive, at this time, to Christ's head, who is the Son of the living God, and see how it is crowned with sharp thorns for thy sins. It cannot easily be expressed how cruel, how long, how sharp this grief was, in the blessed and glorious head of Jesus, far more sacred and holy than all the heads of the saints and true Nazarites. Whose most holy crown the sharp razor had not touched, nor had a hair of his head fallen to the ground, unless, perchance, the wicked Jews and some of the high priest's servants furiously tore some of the hairs of his sacred head, or pulled off some part of his venerable beard with their impious hands; for they are conceived to have heaped more contumelies and wounds upon Christ than are particularly written of by the evangelists. However, St. Luke saith they blasphemed many more things against him; for some openly scoffed at him, some yet more perverse than they, added contumelious words; others again more cruel than wild beasts, gnashed their teeth at him, and loaded him with many stripes, and trampled on his sacred feet with theirs, which Mary Magdalene had some time since washed and anointed with her tears. Ah, my dear Lord God, how deeply do the points of the thorns strike into thy head, how grievously do they rend thy tender flesh, and wound thy veins and sinews! so that streams of blood run down thy neck, thine eyes, thine ears, and heavenly countenance; and obscure thy comely face and all its beauty. O wicked and exasperating generation, why dost thou so cruelly punish the innocent? Why dost thou oppress the pious and humble? And why dost thou thus wreath his head with thorns? Thou falsely imposest a

capital crime upon him—namely, that he made himself a king, whereas he never used any royal ornaments according to the pomp of this world. He never affected a crown—he never hurt any man in word or work. But on the contrary, healed those whom the devil had hurt and oppressed.

22. O ye daughters of Jerusalem, and all ye devout matrons, come and behold your king, Christ Jesus of Nazareth, the true and peaceable Solomon, who sprung from David's royal stock. See how, in the day of his coronation, he is crowned with a crown of thorns by the impious members of the synagogue, by the devil's suggestion, and the envious importunities of the priests. Then did his most blessed mother, Mary, weep most bitterly, together with saint Mary Magdalene, and her exceeding desolate companions. The disciples also wept, while they were dispersed among the Jews, with grief and confusion, upon the sight of the crown of thorns, which was most rudely pressed down upon the sacred head of Christ, their Lord and Master, while the judge cried out before the enraged people, "Behold your king."

23. Consider now, O you faithful of Christ, whether you ever read or heard of such contumely, and so cruel a punishment inflicted upon any of the holy kings and prophets in times of old, as now is inflicted upon the Lord of the prophets, the king of angels, the highest of all priests, the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world, by the most exquisite torments of corporal punishment. Behold how he that appeared glorious for his great signs and wonders, is now most unworthily treated with scoffs and scorns, and is torn with rods and

whips. The princes upbraid and dishonour him with reproaches never before heard of, and torment him with most cruel and piercing thorns, whom they were chiefly obliged to honour and to receive as their true King and high priest. But they proceed the contrary way, notwithstanding the multitude of his benefits, and become more eager and cruel against the author of their own salvation. For they present him sharp thorns instead of roses and lilies—instead of gems and precious stones they give him rough blows—for his regal crown, a garland of thorns—for his gold chain, an unmerciful blow on the face—for his silken robe, an ignominious white garment, as if he had been a fool—for his royal purple, red drops of blood—for his silver belt, a slender linen garment—for a king-like sceptre, a contemptible reed—for his banner, a cross with a title written upon it—for his regal mantle, a garment without seam—for a shield, a veil over his eyes—for the spear of a king, a soldier's lance—for his mitre, a handkerchief on his naked head—for a doctor's pulpit, a marble pillar—for his cup, a sponge—for wine, vinegar—for nectar, myrrh—for sweet drink, bitter gall—for a kiss, spittle—for compassion, scornful derision—and for his farewell, a curse.

24. Besides the above-mentioned sorrows, he suffered the pains of extreme desolation. For he is forsaken by his father in his greatest distress, as though he were not his beloved Son. He is abandoned by his disciples and all his friends as a poor stranger and pilgrim. He loses his best companions, and meets with most malicious enemies. He lost his champion St. Peter, and had in place of him, Malchus,

Peter's accuser. Why should I relate more? He had Simon Cyreneus, who bore his cross, for his standard-bearer—on each side, a thief—all around him a wicked multitude—and for his grave a hard stone hewn out of a rock. Yet amidst all these disgraces heaped upon our Saviour Christ, the pious lamentations of his friends were not wanting; and although they kept private, and stood afar off, they lamented secretly. Never was so much confusion seen in Israel, from the day of the Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem. And all these things were done to accomplish the divine ordinance for our salvation, and fulfil the holy oracles of the prophets. Behold, with these weapons it is that Christ Jesus of Nazareth, being armed, goes out to fight against the princes of the world, and to redeem mankind with his precious blood. He fought even unto death, and by humility conquered the pride of the devil—by patience, the cruelty of the world—by the most bitter pains of the cross, the delicacy of the flesh. He left us an example of a holy life, sacred words for our meditations, and most sovereign remedies against all vices. To the end we might avoid sin, and attain to life everlasting by the cross. To him be praise and glory for all his blessings in heaven and on earth, for ever.—Amen.



## OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, AND THE SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION OF THE SOUL.

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“I am risen, and yet I am with thee. Halleluiah.” This is the voice of Christ to the church, and to every faithful soul ; who exceedingly sorrows for his passion, and remains, as it were, deprived of all consolation. To her therefore Christ in his resurrection speaks in spirit, and with the sweet words of his mouth most graciously comforts her, saying : “I am risen, and yet I am with thee.” I am not forgetful of thee ; I forget not my espousals, but I appear unto thee as a most victorious conqueror over death, and I announce unto thee the joys of eternal felicity ; to the end that thou shouldst congratulate with me in the ineffable glory of my resurrection, which now I have attained to, which I am never more to lose, or ever to die again. Yesterday you wept and lamented sorely for my passion ; but now weep no more, for I am truly risen, and I am present with you, by the omnipresence of my Majesty, who suffered through the infirmity of flesh. Now I am crowned with the highest glory, and clothed with the light of immortality, who so lately hung upon the cross, being condemned to a most ignominious death. I lay three days in a sepulchre, but now I live, saith our Lord and Redeemer, that you may live by me and with me.

2. I rose this day from the dead, by my Father's glory, and you at the last day shall rise with my elect, being to be drawn thence by the divine power, and to be crowned according to your merits. Rejoice, therefore, exceedingly, with the voice of exultation, and with great thanksgiving pay devout canticles of praise, by singing Halleluiah, and by stirring your hearts up to the heavenly feasts above. O daughters of Zion, rejoice with heart and mouth, because the hour of temporal sorrow is past over, and the day of eternal joy is returned, which is the hope of your future glory. Let the Jews, who crucified me, be sad. Let the Gentiles, who derided me, be put to confusion : let all those that would not believe in me be struck with dread ; but let the faithful who love me rejoice ; and let all the people, who upon the hearing of my passion wept and moaned, receive consolation. Let my disciples, who were scattered to and fro, who fled from me, and abandoned me amidst my torments, draw near unto me. Let the humble and devout approach to me ; let the priests and ministers clothed in white go out in procession : let all Christians come to my table with great reverence, and let all the people keep holy this Easter-day, the day of my Resurrection.

3. For I am indeed the resurrection and the life : I am the living bread which came down from heaven, and I give life to the world. I am the good pastor who feed my simple and obedient sheep, who abandon their own will in all things, and follow mine. I am the hidden manna, the joy of the angels, the christian passover, and the saints' felicity, rejoicing the angels in heaven with my clear vision, and communicating

men on earth with my holy sacrament. Be not troubled therefore although the world despise you ; be not discontented and sad, as if you were forsaken of God ; be not in fear and apprehension, as though your enemies compassed you round about. I have not forsaken you hitherto, nor will I hereafter forsake you. I have not yet, nor will I henceforth cast you off. But I will support you in all good things, and conduct you through sundry temptations : and I will purge and try you as gold in the fire. In the time of tribulation I will appear unto you and comfort you with my presence ; by infusing grace into your soul, by giving you the wine of compunction to drink, and anointing you with the oil of gladness, that you may shed tears, and feel a wonderful sweetness, that so you may be set on fire and melt away. Thus will I comfort those that bewail me, in this vale of tears, who avoid all levity of behaviour, and turn their eyes in upon their own hearts. I have a care of you, and my eyes are fixed upon my faithful, that they may sit with me in the kingdom of my heavenly Father, and see the splendour thereof, which I possessed from all eternity, and prepared for my friends. I will bestow an overflowing reward upon them, when they rise from the dead glorious and incorruptible. For this cause I suffered a cruel death, broke open the gates of hell, I subdued the devil, I delivered the holy fathers out of limbus, I opened heaven's gates ; to the end I might bring the elect to eternal beatitude.

4. But esteem not yourselves shut out from this joy, nor to be a stranger to the happy society of the saints. For though you be yet clothed with mor-

talities and live amidst temptations, yet shall you hereafter enjoy my vision, if you remain faithful and constant in following my footsteps; as I remained in the love of my Father by obeying him unto death. Be therefore courageous in temptation, and patient in all tribulation, that you may be partakers of my eternal glory. Despair not, whatever adversity may seem to threaten you or human consolation forsake you. My manner is not to pass by the mournful, nor to despise those that pray, but mercifully to hear those who call upon me with a contrite heart. I try those that fight, and will crown such as persevere to the end. I suffer my beloved to be afflicted for a short time, and whilst she least thinks of it, and conceives herself unworthy of all consolation, I suddenly appear and enlighten the ignorant. Thus I did with my disciples and the holy women who visited my sepulchre, for they were in great sorrow and sadness; they had lost all hope, they had no comfort, they were ignorant what to do or whither to go. In the meantime their greatest delight and consolation was to weep bitterly, and earnestly to inquire whether they might be able to hear any tidings of me. And, behold, when all human assistance failed, divine aid was forthwith present with them, and they met with more happiness than they could have imagined. For I first sent my angels out to bring them good tidings lest they might remain any longer disconsolate, that being raised up into the hope of eternal life, they might expect the king of glory.

5. I deferred therefore presently to appear, that their desire to seek me might increase, and that so

they might be purified to see me more clearly when I should appear unto them, and might more devoutly and clearly love me and more reverently adore me. I knew the time and manner how to comfort the sorrowful, and what the minds of mortals were capable of. I did not, therefore, neglect or despise their pious desires, or reject the labours and sufferances of the afflicted; but I made trial of their fidelity, instructed their ignorance, comforted their pusillanimity, inflamed their love, repressed their fear, and thence by weeping, praying, seeking, and persevering, they merited to see me, whom they eagerly desired. And I fulfilled what I foretold them: I will see you again, and your heart shall be overjoyed, and none shall bereave you of your joy. And therefore thou that hearest these things prepare thy heart to receive the grace of devotion. Expect with patience till I come again, and visit thy heart by delivering thee from all vexation and adversity, and by bringing thee to a new state of exultation. Then thou wilt be able to sing with joy, and know experimentally how true and joyful this *Introit* is; I am risen, and yet I am with you. *Hallelujah.*

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#### ON THE JOY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S RESURRECTION.

1. "This is the day which our Lord has made, let us exult and rejoice therein." This solemn Paschal feast administers to us an exceeding great spiritual joy. We must therefore rejoice in it, not according to the flesh, nor according to the vanity of the world, but according to God in the azimes of sincerity and

truth. Now it is that we ought to crave a more ample grace, and to observe a greater purity of heart. Now the mind is to be raised and transferred to heavenly desires, by the study and endeavours of a new life. God upon a most just cause made this day most famous and most holy, that we might rejoice in it above all the feasts in the year. Let all in general, and every one in particular, pronounce, All hail the brightest day that ever did shine to us since hell's darkness prevailed over the earth. For our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the King of Glory, and Prince of the kings of the earth, rose this day from the dead, and gave the hope of eternal life to all that believe in him all over the universal world. For when he rose in the flesh, which he took of the blessed Virgin, and offered it up for us upon the cross, the handwriting of our damnation was blotted out, and death being subdued, the entrance to eternal glory was laid open to us. Open thy mouth, therefore, O thou devout soul, and loudly sing, with all the Catholic Church, with true joy of heart: "This is the day which our Lord made, let us exult and rejoice in it. Hallelujah."

2. O truly joyful and memorable verse, which is sung so sweetly and so often repeated in the canonical hours, and with its harmony stirs up devotion and collects the dispersed, and most powerfully draws us to devotion. Attend, therefore, not so much to the melody which sounds outwardly to the ears, but diligently study the sense of the holy words which are spoken, and make use of the sweetness of the song to ascend and dive into the interior meaning, lest by the excellency of your voice you might lose



the fruit of your labour, who are commanded by the Holy Ghost to sing to God, and in heart to offer your harmony to your Lord and Master. Blessed is that man who is employed in these holy exercises, and yet applies his whole intention to the joys of the interior feast, that by the means of these temporal feasts he may tend to eternal glory, as the apostle teacheth, saying: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, taste the things that are above, not those that are upon earth." I know nothing that is sung all the whole year long more joyful and pleasant than what is performed in these paschal joys. For every voice and every song continually resounds *Hallelujah*, and all ends in *Hallelujah*. Wherein is figuratively intimated unto us how we are to be employed for ever in that eternal life, when freed from these temporal miseries and translated into heavenly repose, we shall praise God with the holy angels, being replenished with the chief good for ever and ever. Justly therefore and venerably should heaven and earth, and all comprised therein, rejoice in the resurrection of Christ, and are commanded to praise God, by whom those special blessings of spiritual gifts and graces are conferred upon us, and yet greater and higher benedictions shall be given us in the end.

3. Now remained elements which were clouded and shut up, as it were, by the winter cold, begin by little and little to open themselves and clear up, and dispose themselves to the future solemnity by a certain pleasantness of the spring. For the earth, which had lain a long time barren and uncultivated, now shows a vigorous fruitfulness, and brings forth

a pleasing verdure. Trees and shrubs and sweet flowers are adorned with fresh green leaves, as with their new summer garments. The birds of the air having passed the hoary winter over, sweetly warble; and flying through the fields and woods, they congratulate the happy return of the calmness of the air, and the fruitfulness of the harvest. The sun, moon, and stars, stream out their beams with a clearer light. In fine, there is no creature which extols not Christ's resurrection by a certain renovation and newness. Since then the very elements testify so great a joy, how greatly ought men and angels to exult, who are so fair above all other creatures? This is the day indeed which our Lord made, as he clearly foretold us in his holy scriptures—by types and figures—by prophets, apostles, and doctors, who conspired unanimously to publish and preach his resurrection. Where all things then, as well the highest as the lowest, conspire together to sing and announce the same truth, let no shadow of doubt possess the heart; because Almighty God is abundantly powerful, fully to perform what we are not able to comprehend, and to produce new effects even out of nothing.

4. While Christ, therefore, appears in his glorified body, and all nature is clothed with a renovated beauty, let not mortal man fail to glorify God, and to be renewed in heart. Give thanks to your Redeemer for his immense benefits bestowed upon yourself and all the faithful. Raise up the eyes of your heart, behold the way wherein Christ walked before you, who is the salvation of your countenance. Follow him by the steps of love, even to the entrance of the gates of heaven. For you have the mirror of

all sanctity and light of heavenly life set before your eyes. Walk with security after Jesus, who is the giver of eternal bliss, the Lord of heaven and earth. None is more holy than he—none more excellent—none richer—none more powerful. “All power,” saith he, “is given unto me in heaven and on earth.” Let thy faith, therefore, stand firm in Jesus Christ—let thy hope blossom and bring forth flowers, and thy charity spring with joy. Be courageous and behave thyself manfully. Fight against the flesh and the world, the devil and his angels, not dreading the force of what adverse power soever. For the lion of the tribe of Judah hath vanquished, nor can any resist his anger—none will be able to resist his hands, because he hath brought all things under his feet. Now heaven rejoiceth—earth exults for joy—Satan sorrows death is fled, and dare no more venture to domineer over Christ. It is secure then to bear arms under such a king. It is sweet and agreeable to live under such a pastor, and to be fed, taught, be subject, and be governed by him who needs the assistance of none, and abounds with all kinds of blessings.

5. Do you therefore strive to imitate the King of kings, your Lord God rising from the dead, that henceforth you may walk in the newness of a better life, by subduing vice, leaving your sinful ways, not returning to your former imperfections, but on the contrary by raising up your heart with more fervour to heavenly desires. For Christ having once conquered death, returned not again to hell, but after he had visited his dear friends upon earth, he joyfully ascended to heaven, and raised up and exalted the

form of a servant above all the powers of the angels, teaching us to ascend into the glory of eternal felicity by the steps of humility, and by the dutiful performance of all due obedience. If therefore you desire heavenly consolations, and to rejoice for ever in the company of the angels, fly carnal pleasures, which bring forth death, seek for the spiritual food and nourishment of the soul, which Christ prepared for those who approach to the holy table of his precious body, which is far sweeter than all corporeal food. For unless the old man with his acts be wholly put off, heavenly sweetness can have no entrance into your heart, and unless the flesh be subject to the spirit, and all worldly care be abandoned, the promised comforting spirit will not come, nor will the eating of the paschal lamb inwardly nourish your soul. That therefore all that is within you may be replenished with spiritual joy, all malice and iniquity must be removed from your hearts, that like newborn children you may walk in the innocence of life, being washed with tears, and adorned with the wedding garments of true charity. Furthermore let our manners and behaviour be humble and edifying, our eyes guarded, and our affections pure, our words full of piety, our ears attentive to the divine word, and let a careful watch be kept over all our senses. For the holy angels, God's ministers, are always present considering our deportment; as who rises first, who prays most devoutly, who sings most cheerfully, who seeks Jesus most fervently. Be therefore the idle news of the world far from us, let foolish fables be avoided, let our words be edifying, that they may make a good impression on all that hear them, and

that he who spoke them may deserve the testimony of a good conscience. Let our Saviour's wonderful works be repeated over and over again : let the good news of Jesus of Nazareth be continually heard among you with joy and delight to you all.

6. Permit not your crucified Lord to depart from your mind. Let Christ's rising appear still before the eyes of your soul. For though he cannot yet be seen with mortal eyes, yet is he secretly touched by frequent sighs and tears. And depart not from the monument until he reveals himself unto you, while you pray unto him. Make inquiry of the holy angels, who always enjoy his clear vision, that they may show us where our Lord and Master may be. Or at least that they would pray for us, that he would vouchsafe to appear to our sorrowful hearts, and comfort them with his sweetest grace. Would to God, O Lord Jesus, that thou wouldst inflame my heart, to seek thee early in the morning with Mary, and to strengthen me in faith, thou, who, by breathing upon the apostles, endowedst them with the Holy Ghost. Lay open the sense of the Scriptures to me, and lead me into all truth, as thou didst promise, thou O Lord who art blessed above all for evermore. Amen.

OF THE MYSTICAL NAME OF PASCH (OR EASTER), AND  
OF THE CONVERSATION OF A NEW LIFE.

*Our Pasch Christ is immolated.* The sacred name of Pasch is most famous and well known to the faithful, and the mystery ought most dearly to be honored among christians. Let all of us therefore consider what hath been done and instituted for our salvation; for the word Pasch points out our Lord's Passover, because this day Christ returned from death to life, and passed from this world to heaven, teaching us thereby to despise earthly, and love heavenly things. We owe, therefore, exceeding thanks to the heavenly father—who restored us to life again in his beloved son—who suffered and was crucified for us in flesh—by whose wounds we are saved, and freed by his bitter passion from eternal death, and therefore we should greatly rejoice in his most glorious resurrection.

2. The sorrows of Christ preceded his cruel death, clearing the enmities of the ancient prevarication, and washing away the stains of our sins. The sweetness of ineffable joy, and the height of eternal glory followed, which shall be given to all that are regenerated in Christ, after the banishment of this world, as to those who return out of Egypt to the joys of heaven. For by the sacrifice of the true lamb, the spiritual Israel was delivered from the captivity of the devil; and the new people of God were translated into the liberty of the heavenly man-



sion. For Christ returning from the dead, changed the old Pasch into a new, and converted their temporal into an eternal life. Well did the apostle, therefore, say, and joyfully doth the holy church sing everywhere—"Our Pasch Christ is immolated." We ought, therefore, to be continually mindful of the passion of Christ, as also of his joyful resurrection, for the consolation of our mortality that by the patience of many tribulations suffered for the name of Christ, we may put on hope and confidence to reign with him for ever. Let our earnest endeavours be now employed in this joyful time, to raise ourselves up into the desire of sincere conversion, and to sing praise to God with spiritual gladness. For Christ is abundantly powerful still more and more to assist us, and to inflame us more fervently with the desire of a heavenly life.

3. But he obscures the splendor of the festivity of Easter, who is more eager to be eating flesh, than to receive the precious body of Christ, wherein is contained the source of all delight, and the food of the soul. For verily, without this wholesome food, all the well furnished tables with the rich man's dainties are dry and insipid. For as the soul is incomparably better than the body, so Christ, who is the food of the soul, far excels all the delights of the most delicious banquets. And though by reason of the solemnity of our Saviour's resurrection, we ought to use more joy and festivity, and better cheer is allowed and in greater abundance; yet must we use them with moderation, and the fear of God ought to restrain the appetites of the flesh. For this moderation is conducive as well to the health of

the body as of the soul; and makes a man more fit to praise God. Let not, therefore, the concupiscence of the flesh vanquish thee, but let the devotion of thy heart by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, subdue what corporal delight soever sensuality may cause thee to find. Blessed is that soul which is led by the odour of Christ's ointment to taste of the heavenly banquet, and cries out with the psalmist, and saith: thy delights are in thy right hand even to the end: but then shall I be satiated when thy glory appears. Certainly all the proud of heart are deceived, who, forsaking true and celestially good things, seek their comfort in earthly things, and without any just moderation gape after great possessions. "Meat and drink," saith the apostle, "is not the kingdom of God; but peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

4. Who is he then that celebrates Easter in spirit? He who departs or flies from vice to virtue; and riseth out of his old life and evil customs, into a new state of devotion. Who is he that worthily honours Easter? He that despiseth worldly honours and aims at God's glory in all his good actions. Who is he that offers a lamb upon Easter eve? He that is truly penitent for his sins, and ceases to sin in time to come. Who is he that eats a roasted lamb with bitter lettuces? He that in bitterness of heart considers Jesus dying upon the cross, and chastiseth himself by a mortified life. Who is the true Hebrew that passeth the Red Sea? He who leaving sensuality, embraces spiritual delights; and, forgetting the things which are passed by, walks quickly on his way. Who is the true son of Abraham? He who makes a progress from servile fear to the true liberty

of the sons of God. Who is the true disciple of Jesus? He that renounces all earthly things, and forsakes his own will. Who is worthy to sit at Christ's table? He that willingly humbles himself for the love of Christ. Who is fit to enter into the kingdom of heaven? He that despises the kingdom of this world, and all the pomp and glory thereof: such a one is a friend of God, a citizen of heaven, and the lord of the world. Who is fit to contemplate the face of Christ, and to penetrate heavenly secrets? He that is clean of heart, fervent in prayer, and wholly addicted to internal things. Who is beloved and acceptable to God? He that is abject in his own eyes, and reposes all transitory things as nothing worth.

## OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

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“I ascend to my Father and your Father: to my God and your God. Hallelujah.” After the mild Jesus the comforter of the sorrowful was risen from the dead, he sent the joyful news of our salvation to his disciples who were grieved for his death, by his most faithful lover Mary Magdalene, saying: Go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my father and your father. O sweet and heavenly words full of joy and love! What news can the faithful hear so delightful as God’s ascension into heaven, and the departure of Jesus to his heavenly father, to mediate for us, that we may securely approach to him, whom we have grievously offended? For whereas our sins put us at a distance from God, how can we be reconciled unto him save only by Jesus Christ our mediator? By whom we have access to the Father, who paid the debt of our sins, and prepared us a place to remain with him for ever in the kingdom of heaven. “I ascend, saith he, to my father and to your father.”

2. O the wonderful goodness of God shewed to poor miserable men, to fugitive disciples, to dispersed

sheep, which had else run even to destruction. He sends not out before him a name of power, he terrifies them not with threatening words, he upbraids them not with the crime of treason, nor reproaches them with the guilt of infidelity, but, mindful of his inbred piety, he grants mercy, and suspends anger: yea, notwithstanding their great transgressions, and cowardly flight, he expresses the sweetness of brotherly love, and lays open the source of undrainable charity, saying: "tell my brethren." O the mellifluous sweetness of the most merciful Jesus, in all his demeanour! Who, being powerful enough, and withal grievously offended by his friends and subjects, sends not out his executioners to imprison criminal man, nor doth he turn them out of their offices, but like a good pastor, who loves his own sheep, he condoles with their infirmity, and provides for their salvation. First he reveals himself by means of his angels, and after that he commands Mary, in his name particularly, to signify the glory of his resurrection to his sorrowful brethren, saying: "Go to my brethren and tell them that I ascend to my father." Our blessed Master affords sweet words: and terms them brethren who had formerly offended him, that he might lay a great emphasis upon that charity wherewith he loved them to the end. For first of all he converted them from the vanity of the world to his faith; he wrought great miracles among them, bestowed large benefits upon them, taught them the ways of truth, and elected them, above all the saints, to the honour of an apostolical dignity. And these (after the storms of temptation, and the infirmity of their fall) he recalls to repentance, and raises them

up to a more fervent state of sanctity; rejoices them with the grace of his visitation; he confirms them wavering in faith, by clear documents, and by showing the marks of his passion: and that they might rise with more vigour, he points them out the way by which they are to ascend to his never fading glory. "I ascend," saith he, "to my Father." If you did love me you would rejoice in this world, because it is for your advantage that I ascend to my father who sent me, that I might prepare for you a place in my father's kingdom, together with all my elect for ever. Be not troubled therefore, nor too much afflicted upon my departure. I will ask my father that your sins may be pardoned. I will fortify and confirm you amidst your adversities. I will comfort you in the banishment of this life. I will crown you in my heavenly kingdom, where your joy shall be full, and secure against all your enemies. For it pleased my heavenly father to bestow the kingdom of God upon you; poor and abject creatures, who have followed my footsteps by a contempt of worldly enticements.

3. From this time that Christ was assumed into his father's glory, the hearts of the apostles were raised up to heavenly things, and they began to be delighted, to tend upwards; hoping, that having once put off the burthen of flesh, they should follow him to glory. For they conceived a great confidence that they should attain to a kingdom above, who, despising all inferior things, led a life of poverty for the love of Christ. They received also the Holy Ghost who was promised, and being confirmed by that blessed gift, they neither feared to suffer chains



nor prisons, nor the horrid torments of death itself. O happy and glorious ascension, whereby human nature in the person of Christ was exalted above all the heavenly choirs, and the ruins of the fallen angels were repaired by the numbers of elected men, marked out with the blood of Christ.

4. Now, O thou Christian soul, who readest these things, be careful and diligent to follow Christ by the steps of love, because Christ's corporeal ascension into heaven is the spiritual elevation of the heart to God. Let not, therefore, thy abode in this present life any more delight thee, but rather let the heavenly mansion among the blessed angels invite thee where the souls of the saints repose, being freed from all troubles and anxieties, and contemplate the face of God for ever and ever. Consider often attentively that sweet word of Christ spoken before his passion: "For I go to prepare for you a place." And call to mind withal, that you have no permanent place here below. Sigh from the bottom of your heart, that there are so many obstacles which retard you from heavenly things; and earnestly desire to be freed from present evils, and speedily to come to Christ. For so should you be in a much more happy state, than to remain here below continually fighting against vice, and to be always in fears and apprehensions. Cry out with the spouse in the Canticles and say: "Draw me after thee," into that happy mansion where all good things abound, and joy without end. But, alas! that joyful hour is not yet arrived. It is not yet the time of reigning, but of suffering; and therefore we must expect the time which God hath appointed for reward, and

incessantly pray till the kingdom of God shall come, whereof Jesus often spoke with his disciples, before he ascended into heaven, that the contradictions of this present life might be rendered more tolerable, by the preceding promises of eternal glory; and that the soul might be inflamed with a greater thirst of heavenly things by how much it suffers greater afflictions in this life. For this is a convincing sign in the elect, that they shall obtain eternal salvation, if they suffer pains and tribulations for the name of Christ. For Christ was necessarily to suffer, and so to enter into his glory.

5. By patience and crosses therefore we must walk to repose; because the heavenly father admits none into eternal bliss unless he follows his beloved son, whom he delivered up to be crucified, by the way of the cross and passion. Raise therefore your heart upwards; look towards heaven; and consider whither thy beloved went. Stretch out your hands after him, pray with bended knees and frequent sighs, that he should please to send the comforting Holy Spirit into your dry and frozen heart, that he may inflame you, and direct you to perform all good things with alacrity. Amen.

## ON THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

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### OF THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1. "They were all replenished with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak." This day the solemnity of the descent of the Holy Ghost is celebrated in the Catholic Church. This day the assemblies of the faithful rejoice with festive joys; the choirs of the clergy make jubilation in hymns and psalms; the priests celebrate their holy masses; and all universally with one accord highly praise God on the coming of the Holy Ghost. For this day the apostles apparently received the Holy Ghost in fiery tongues, and forthwith they were interiorly inflamed with divine love, and they outwardly preached God's word with confidence. This day the Christian faith began to be published, and the number of the faithful to be augmented in Jerusalem. This day great joy was made among the people, and many miracles were wrought upon the infirm by the apostles. For from the very beginning of the world there were never so large gifts of the Holy Ghost heard of. This day holy religion and apostolical life took its rise, which proved in process of time the mirror of all religious

sanctity, and the model of living in common without any exclusive property. This day Christ's apostles were so confirmed in charity, and so enlightened with the grace of the Holy Ghost, that they sunk under no adversities, were subdued by no prosperities, seduced by no errors, nor could they be drawn by any persuasions from the integrity of faith. This day the simple and abject become the only wise men; poor fishermen become great doctors; and what they learnt not in the schools by disputation, they received from heaven by devout prayer. This day illiterate and timorous persons become eloquent and resolute; and they who knew one only tongue, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost speak of divine things in all languages. This day earthly men are made celestial, and they who were abject and despicable creatures, become wonderful to all nations under the heavens; and although they were reputed to know little or nothing, produce and expound testimonies touching Christ, out of the law and the prophets. This day an angelical life began on earth, and a new heaven appeared in the world, because the faithful learnt to raise up their hearts from the flesh to the spirit, from coldness to fervour, from earth to heaven.

2. O how fervent were they who were content with so little; how devout and obedient were they who of their own accord subjected themselves to the apostolical counsels? These are the works of the Holy Ghost, which join together the hearts of the faithful, out of many nations, in one faith; raised to heavenly things through the hope of eternal happiness, and suddenly inflames them with the fire of divine love. By these holy apostles the primitive

church was founded and diffused all over the world, being endowed with holy doctrine, and wonderfully confirmed by many miracles. From these blessed apostles and their followers, the holy hermits first received the form of a perfect abnegation of themselves, and left us many of their disciples for our example. Again, our glorious father, St. Augustine, that famous doctor, came to the contempt of the world by the example of the same apostolical men and pious hermits : and afterwards being made priest and bishop, he instituted a monastery of clergymen, and began to live in common together with many servants of God, according to that apostolical manner of life, and to whom he delivered the rule he had written to be observed. In like manner the holy father Bennet, a diligent observer of apostolical life, wrote another rule of monastical discipline, replete with all virtues, whereby the monks leading a religious life, happily passed on to the glory of eternal beatitude. Yea, many other religious men, inspired with the grace of the Holy Ghost, and desiring to follow the counsels of evangelical perfection, instituted the holy religious orders in sundry parts of the world, and obtained so large a portion of God's grace that they were illustrious for apostolical signs and wonders, and enlightened the holy church with doctrine and examples. The faithful therefore ought certainly to honour this most holy day with a special devotion, and to invoke the grace of the Holy Ghost, that they might merit to be enriched and solaced by his visitation—to be inflamed with his love—to be washed in his heavenly dew—and be purged from all filth of sin.

3. For all the holy and elect were drawn to the divine service, and called out of the errors of the Gentiles, by the inspiration of this holy spirit, even from the beginning of the world ; and they who received divine gifts were most acceptable to God in humility. And even to this day the Holy Ghost works many good works of charity in the hearts of the faithful, grateful to himself and profitable to mankind ; and though he show not public miracles, yet doth he often afford the comforts of interior devotion. He discloses also the hidden mysteries of the holy scriptures to such as pray and sing psalms attentively, which are the truest signs of his knowledge and love. And bestows upon us the helps of spiritual fortitude, against the manifold assaults of human frailty. For it is he who instructs his faithful by his holy word—governs them by their prelates—administers the sacrament by their priests, lest they might swerve from the right path in the pilgrimage of this life and faint in their labours. He endues the hearts of men with compunction for sins past, excuses their daily negligence and defects ; and he suffers not the blemish of a small fault to make any long stay in the conscience of the faithful soul. He incites us to renew our fervour—to pray devoutly—to read studiously—to obey promptly—to seek the lowest things—and to follow our devout exercises. He weans us from earthly things, and invites us to true repose of heart—he corrects us for the use of light words—he assuages anger, expels lust, takes away envy, represses gluttony, moves us to avoid sloth and love diligence—he teaches us what to fly in thought and work—he is present to



such as are in tribulation—he comforts the humble, supports the weak in heart, hears those that lament, hath compassion on those that weep, and pardons the penitent sinner.

4. As often, therefore, as you suffer tribulation or temptation, have presently recourse to his heavenly assistance, and humbly implore his holy grace: expose all your anxieties and troubles before him, and commit yourself wholly to his providence, that he would mercifully dispose of all your adversities to his own glory, and according to his good pleasure, and to the greater advantage of your soul, and bring all to a happy period. For he knows all things, sounds and penetrates all things, and permits nothing to befall you without just cause—he scourges and he cures—he humbles and he exalts. This is the special operation of the Holy Ghost in this frail body of ours, which is infected with various misery, that by true contrition the stains of our sins might be purged away, and our former faults might be converted into a large measure of humility: and that our good works begun, might grow up to more perfection, that thus no time might slip without spiritual profit; but that all our thoughts, words, and works, might tend, and constantly persevere to, the honour of God and the most blessed Trinity. Which blessings I beseech the Holy Ghost to grant, through his most mild grace, who this day most plentifully replenished the hearts of the apostles. Amen.

## OF THE CONSOLATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1. "I will ask my Father, and he will give you another Paraclete." When our Lord Jesus Christ was corporeally to depart from his disciples, he promised the consolation of the Holy Ghost, to those that sorrowed for his departure, who would never recede from their hearts, but would remain with them for ever. O the blessed promise of Christ! which was not in point of worldly joy, but of the consolation of the Holy Ghost, which is so precious and delightful, that no earthly thing is comparable to it. The holy apostles took much comfort in Christ's humanity, while they heard divine speeches from his mouth, and saw with their eyes the admirable miracles which he wrought. And thence they had just cause to be troubled at his departure, as being separated like poor orphans from his delightful company, and fearing to be left without their necessary support amidst the malice and scandals of the Jews. Wherefore, that most mild master of theirs, who knew all secrets, and foresaw all future events, comforts his disciples in the danger which hangs over their heads, and instead of his corporeal presence, he firmly promiseth them spiritual and permanent consolation. For they were worthy of heavenly consolation, and to have the divinity dwell in them, as being now true contemners of the world, and perfect imitators of the humble life of Christ. For such the Father loveth: and for such the Son prayeth; and such the Holy Ghost heareth and illumineth.

2. Behold now the inestimable goodness of divine piety, how the Son of God made choice of the poor and simple, to be companions with him in preaching for the world's conversion, to whom also he deigned to give the precious gifts of the Holy Ghost, for the vain and transitory things of this world which they had abandoned. And why this? To the end he might teach us to condemn the glory of the world, and embrace humility as most grateful to him. Having then heard these divine oracles, O religious soul, fly honours and delights, forsake worldly cares, and prepare thy heart by devout prayer to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And if you be already in a good state, and walk now no more in the ways of the world, do not begin to look back again, be not content with things present, but still breathe after perfect and holy things more ardently; and that you may now merit to receive new grace, labour for compunction; shutting yourself up in your cell, as though you were with the apostles in the refectory where the last supper was made. For it is a probable sign of God's present grace, when one hath an ardent desire to attain to greater perfection; when he heartily laments his daily defects; when he abstains from many things which are otherwise lawful; when he diligently ponders by what means he may best advance in virtue; and when he never looks upon himself to be perfect in any good thing, or even to be able worthily to comply with any duty. For we must utterly renounce all inferior things, if we desire to be enlivened with the consolation of the Holy Ghost, to be confirmed by his power, or to be inflamed with his love.

3. But we must yet further inquire by what means or exercises the holy apostles obtained so great grace ; for it was not by some sudden conversion, nor in one day's space only, that they arrived at so great an height of perfection ; but they grew up by little and little, and by the gradual progress of virtue, and were diligently instructed by a good master like humble scholars in the school of Christ. And in the first place, they renounced all things for the love of Christ, and stript themselves of parents, kinsfolk, and all earthly affections ; being prepared to undergo labours, poverty, and the curses of men together with him. Whence he said to them before his passion : " You are they that have remained with me amidst my temptations." Lo ! these are the apostles' good beginnings, for being stript of earthly things, and tried in adversities, they perseveringly adhered to Christ. And although they swerved from him in the time of his passion, through the fear of death, yet they much deplored that weakness, and becoming thereby thoroughly acquainted with their own infirmity, they returned to Christ again with greater humility and more fervent love. For after his resurrection he visited them again, and confirmed them by word of mouth and scripture, that they might thereby make a greater advancement in faith and spiritual life. In fine, when Christ ascended into heaven, they applied their entire hopes to heavenly things : nor were they then sorrowful upon his departure, but rather exulted with joy in the magnificence of his glory, and returned to Jerusalem with much gladness. And being all assembled together they employed themselves unanimously in

prayer and meditations, and prepared themselves with much humility and fervour, to receive the grace of the Holy Ghost which was to be sent them from heaven. And remaining there with Mary the Mother of God, they conferred together very devoutly of the acts, doctrine, and miracles of our Saviour. And as we may piously believe, they heard and learned many of Christ's mysteries of the blessed Virgin.

4. There did they turn all their desires to inward and heavenly promises, leaving worldly, and avoiding all idle discourses; that over and above the benedictions they had already received, they might also deserve to receive the Holy Ghost, in a more plentiful measure. And it came so to pass. For at his coming they were all filled, and were endowed and illuminated with such abundance of precious gifts, that they did far outshine and excel the patriarchs and prophets in wonders, power, and doctrine.

For whatever mysteries were veiled in the law and prophets they discovered by the light of the Holy Ghost, and were able to publish them in sundry tongues. This was very necessary for the edification of the whole church, that they should first be perfectly instructed in all the mysteries and sacraments of our salvation, who were afterwards to preach the gospel of Christ to all people throughout the world, the Father therefore bestowed a good spirit upon those that besought him, and enriched the apostles' hearts with so plentiful a benediction, that they now desired no earthly thing, nor feared any worldly adversity, but even rejoiced to suffer afflictions for the name of Jesus. He fortified them with the armour

of spiritual warfare, together with the fulness of knowledge, that they might be armed with divine wisdom against the errors of the Gentiles, to subdue the eloquence of the philosophers; and that they might firmly bear away the victory of patience, against the cruelty of their persecutors. Truly great grace did shine in the Apostles, since men so simple, according to the world, grew up to so high a degree of sanctity in so short a space, that their preaching, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, was extended even to the most remote corners of the earth.

5. Observe also in the sequel of what has already been said, how the holy apostles who were most dear to Christ, did not receive this spiritual consolation but after great endeavours and due preparation: nor did they live in this world without strife and bodily affliction; but were even so much more fervently affected to Christ, and the salvation of their neighbour, by how much they acknowledge themselves to have received more plentiful gifts above all others. Wherein they aimed not at their own glory, or some transitory reward of human praise, but acted purely with a view to God's honour, and the attainment of heavenly glory, after the pains and labours of this life. They carefully endeavoured to preserve the grace received from above with humility and mildness of heart, in all their conversation amongst the Gentiles. Nor did they remain in a slothful ease, or seek for worldly advantages, but thought upon the gaining of souls, and edifying the people by good example, and offered up great fruit to God. Their words and works therefore diligently considered are very profitable to all religious and devout persons, who are re-



solved to take up the cross of Christ, and follow an apostolical life, that they may still become more fervent in spiritual advancement, and in the constant observance of the rules of the gospel, that so by the help of the grace of the Holy Ghost, they may attain to eternal salvation together with all the saints. Amen.

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OF THE HOLY AND UNANIMOUS CONVERSATION OF THE  
PRIMITIVE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

1. "The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul in God." O what a holy and joyful congregation was that in the primitive church, gathered together in the Holy Ghost, which could not be disquieted, as long as the unity of faith was kept entire in the bands of charity. The forsaking of property in point of our temporal fortunes; conformity in good manners; prompt obedience in subjects; an exemplary life in supporting a pious condescension to the infirmity of others; strict corrections of transgressions, and a due subordination in every office and charge, do most conduce to the perfect observance of charity. And every one, to his utmost endeavour, stands obliged to advance the common good, that nothing may be wanting to the community, or otherwise may perish; to the end that charity may shine in all our works, and God may be highly glorified thereby. All these blessed things were first observed by the holy apostles, and afterwards conveyed by their example to the rest of the faithful, but they are recommended in a more peculiar manner to re-

ligious persons, and the prelates of the church. For as long as an Apostolical life did shine in the head and members, they were accompanied with blessings and much grace universally. And because they sought God, and contemned earthly things, they received also an increase of temporal blessings, together with spiritual gifts. They were even deemed so much more worthy of greater honour, by how much they had a more humble opinion of themselves, and reputed all human glory as a mere nothing. They used the blessings they received well and modestly, nor were they puffed up with pride by the dignities and benefices conferred upon them, but governed their subjects in great discipline, with a fatherly care and solicitude. Again, taking much compassion on the poor and infirm, they most willingly afforded them assistance, and bestowed words of sweet consolation upon such as were afflicted and tempted. They repressed idle words in themselves and others, knowing that every one was liable to render an account at the day of judgment of the idle words that he had spoken.

2. But as soon as some began to grow cold in the fervour of faith, and immoderately to desire earthly contentments, seeking their own ease, and ambitioning honours; then, alas! murmurings and scandals arose, and the tares of dissension (which the enemy had sown) grew up, and corrupted the good seed which was sown in the vineyard of the Lord. But the holy apostles endeavoured to remedy this pestilent disease by their most wholesome counsel; and thereupon made choice of faithful ministers to provide necessary food for the multitude. And they

themselves (preferring spiritual before temporal things) were employed in prayer and preaching as the Holy Ghost had instructed them ; and they produced the testimonies of the law and prophets against the questions which were put to them, and against all emergent occasions. And the Holy Ghost did still more and more largely bestow his gifts upon those new converts. For he replenished some of the believers with the spirit of prophecy for the comfort of the primitive church. He instituted certain doctors for the instruction of the ignorant. He converted withal many of the priests and masters of the law to the truth of the gospel. And, finally, he wrought many signs and wonders among the foreign nations to propagate the Catholic faith. The devil, our most cruel foe, saw these things and envied them. He was enraged, and stirred up the kings and potentates of the earth into commotion : who, armed with madness, persecuted the faithful everywhere. And whereas a greater proportion of grace reigned at Jerusalem, and the apostolical fervour grew up to a high pitch, Satan raged there more furiously, and strove to extinguish the new-born church with the scourge of persecution, and to banish the faithful from their own dwellings into foreign nations. But God turned the malice of the devil, and this temporal persecution of the faithful, to the salvation of many, and to the more evident knowledge of his holy name. And the temporal tribulation of the just is made the profitable purgation of vices ; and what the crafty tempter had prepared for ruin, our pious Saviour turned to the eternal glory of the patient sufferers. For had there not been so

cruel a persecution on earth. there had not been so many martyrs crowned in heaven. For multitudes of the faithful resolved rather to pour forth their blood than to deny their faith; and willingly to undergo death rather than to swerve from the love of Christ.

3. For far be it from us to conceive that the devil, with his adherents, should be more powerful to work mischief, than Christ, with his angels, to defeat their wicked designs. He justly permitted them, who, knowing the actions and strength of every one of his servants, translated his elect, by those occasions of affliction, to eternal glory; and hurled down their adversaries by his wrathful judgment into eternal flames. So as well the good as the bad, merit to receive their just rewards according to their works. For the justice of God leaves no good unrewarded, nor evil unpunished.

4. Nor ought weak souls to be scandalised that tares and afflictions appear so early in the church, since the good are always mixed with the bad and imperfect; for by how much they are more holy, by so much the more rare, as experience makes manifest. For certainly we meet with more imperfect than perfect people; and the number of the active is greater than that of the contemplative life. Among many subjects few are found fit for their offices, and yet such as are fit to govern well are in far less number. In all these things human frailty appears, and our pride is confounded: because we are so prone to vice, and so slow to follow things of more perfection, yet can none justly reproach his fellow-companion, that he is full of faults and imperfec-

tions, because we are all frail and miserable. True perfection is rarely found upon earth ; and in every corner of the world we meet with broken vessels. Every one, therefore, ought to have his eye turned upon himself, and have compassion on his sinful neighbour ; and to look upon him without indignation, although now and then he may fall into sin. Whereupon Saint James saith : “ We all of us offend in many things.” We must therefore have recourse to an humble confession : that the acknowledgment of our own frailty may supply the want of weight and defects of our sanctity. And that we may be so much more humble in our hearts, the more we fall short of true perfection. We are all brethren in offending and falling ; and none is sure of his own perseverance. As long, therefore, as we live here below, we ought mildly to bear with our infirm brothers, and ever to expect some adversaries. For even Christ himself bore with the imperfections of his disciples, and often heard the detractions of the Pharisees, though he were even perfect in all things. But God wisely knows how to manage the adversities of this world (which the good and righteous are never free from) to their great advantage and happiness ; for by these thorns and storms the mind is weaned from worldly delights. The heart is excited to the love of heavenly things, and man is exercised in patience. He learns to have compassion on the afflicted, he is humbled in adversities, and is conformed to the passion of Christ. He becomes more contrite and less dissolute—he prays more fervently and sorrows more frequently. He is weary of living, and he desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ, be-

cause he meets with no peace in this world. But our pious Lord, who knows what is most wholesome for us, often delays to accomplish the desires of his servants for their greater good, that they may still be more and more purified and fitted to attain the promised joys of heaven. He hears their cries, he sees the affliction of those that are in tribulation, yet doth not forthwith free them from their vexations, that their merit may be increased by suffering adversities. For he hath mercy, and hears us to our salvation, but not always according to our own desires. And because he is disposed to bestow a kingdom of eternal beatitude upon them, he mixes their life with divers cups of bitterness, that they may not place their hopes upon worldly things, nor fall in love with their banishment, instead of their country of heavenly delights.

5. Temporal miseries patiently endured, are of very great efficacy to blot out our sins—to reconcile us to the divine mercy—to diminish the pains of purgatory—to obtain greater grace—and to add to the weight of our future glory. What man is there so pure and circumspect, so perfect in all his conversation from morning to night, who sometimes offends not in word, deed, or thought, either knowingly or ignorantly? Who is of so good a conscience that he hath nothing to accuse himself of? Who is so pure and innocent that he may not justly fear to be found guilty of some offence in the last judgment? For all things shall be most strictly discussed before God the most just judge, yea even the things which now are reputed very little, or as nothing. While then time is, and the access to mercy lies as yet open, let



us all together betake ourselves to penance, and fervently endeavour for our amendment. Our God is sweet and mild, and doth willingly pardon our offences, if we do humbly acknowledge and deplore them. And whereas we are truly brethren in Christ, let us pray for one another, as brotherly charity exacts at our hands. Let us serve one another, support one another, admonish one another, comfort one another, rejoice with one another, and condole with one another. Let us strive to love one another as Christ loved us, and delivered himself up for our love. Who had much patience with us in point of our former sins, and to this hour bears with our imperfections through hope of our amendment, and that we might learn to take compassion of our neighbours, and patiently to bear with their imperfections. If we observe and perform these things we shall fulfil the law of Christ—become his true disciples and his dearest friends—beloved by the Father, adopted by the Son, inflamed by the Holy Ghost, and predestined and elected by the whole blessed Trinity. And then that may be said and verified of us, which is read in the Acts of the Apostles, concerning the primitive church: “The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul in God, and all was common among them.” Amen.

## CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

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Our whole perfection consists in loving our most amiable God: "Charity is the bond of perfection" (Coloss. iii. 14); and all the perfection of the love of God consists in uniting our will with his most holy will. "The principal effect of love," says St. Dionysius, (*De div. Nom. c. 4.*) "is to unite the wills of those who love, so as to make them but one and the same will." Hence the more any one is united with the divine will, the greater will be his love. Mortifications, meditations, communions, and works of charity towards our neighbour, are indeed pleasing to God; but when? When they are performed according to his will; but when they are not influenced by the will of God, they are not only not pleasing to him, but hateful, and deserve only punishment. If a master had two servants, one of whom toiled through the day without ceasing, but who would do everything in his own way, while the other toiled and was obedient to his master, assuredly

the master would love the second rather than the first. How can our actions promote the glory of God, when they are not according to his good pleasure? The Lord, said the prophet to Saul, desires not sacrifices, but obedience to his wishes: "Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? It is like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey." (1 Kings xv. 22, 23.) He who labours according to his own will, and not according to the will of God, commits a species of idolatry; because instead of adoring the divine will, he, in a certain way, adores his own.

The greatest glory then that we can give God, is to fulfil his blessed will in all things. Our Redeemer, who came on earth to promote the divine glory by accomplishing the divine will, came principally to teach us by his examples to do so likewise. Hear how St. Paul introduces him as speaking to his eternal Father: "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: but a body thou hast fitted to me...Then said I: Behold I come...that I should do thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 5. 9). Thou hast refused the victims which men offered thee, and hast desired that I should sacrifice to thee the body which thou hast given me; behold me ready to do thy will. And he frequently declared that he came not to do his own will, but that of his Father: "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." (St. John vi. 38.) And in this he wished that the world should know the love which he had for his Father, in his obedience to his will, which was that he should be sacrificed upon the cross for the salvation of men: hence, in the garden,

when he advanced to meet his enemies, who came to apprehend him for the purpose of putting him to death, he said : "That the world may know that I love the Father : and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I : arise, let us go hence." (St. John xiv. 31.) And in this, in the doing of the divine will, he said that he recognised who was his brother : "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother." (St. Matt. xii. 50.)

This has ever been the end which all the Saints have had constantly in view : the accomplishment of the will of God ; well knowing that in this consisted all the perfection of the soul. The blessed Henry Susone said : "God does not desire that we should abound in spiritual lights, but that in all things we should submit to his will." And St. Teresa : "All that should be sought for in the exercise of prayer is conformity of our will with the divine will ; assuredly in this consists the highest perfection. He who excels most in this practice will receive the greatest gifts from God, and will make the most progress in perfection." The blessed Stephana de Soncino, a nun of the order of St. Dominic, being one day conducted in a vision into heaven, saw some persons who had died, and whom she knew, placed among the Seraphim, and was told that they had been raised to so high a degree of glory on account of their perfect uniformity, while on earth, with the will of God. And the above mentioned B. Susone, speaking of himself, said : "I would rather be the vilest worm on earth, with the will of God, than a seraph with my own."

We in this world must learn from the saints in heaven how we are to love God. The pure and perfect love which the blessed in heaven have for God, consists in the perfect union of themselves with his holy will. If the Seraphim understood it to be his will, that they should be employed for all eternity in raising heaps of sand on the sea shore, or in the meanest employment on earth, they would do it with the utmost delight. Nay more; if God should signify to them that they should burn in the fire of hell, they would immediately cast themselves down into that abyss to do the divine will. And Jesus Christ teaches us to pray that we may do the will of God on earth as the Blessed do in heaven: "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." (St. Matt. vi. 10).

Our Lord called David a man according to his own heart, because David did his will: "I have found David.....a man according to my own heart, who shall do all my wills" (Acts xiii. 22). David was always prepared to embrace the divine will, as he himself declares: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready" (Ps. lvi. 8). And all that he asked of the Lord was, to teach him to do his will. "Teach me to do thy will" (cxlii. 10). One act of perfect uniformity to the divine will is sufficient to make a saint. Witness a St. Paul; while yet a persecutor of the Church, he was enlightened and converted by Jesus Christ: upon which, how did he proceed? what did he say? All he did was to offer himself to the divine will, saying: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6). And behold our Lord declared him to be a vessel of election, and apostle

of the Gentiles : " This man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles." (Acts ix. 15). Yes, for he who gives his will to God, gives him every thing ; he who gives him his property in alms, his blood in disciplines, his food in fasts, gives to God a part of what he possesses ; but he who gives him his will, gives him the whole ; and hence he is able to say : " Lord, I am poor, but I give thee all I have : giving thee my will, I have nothing more that I can give thee." But this indeed is all that God expects from us : " Son, give me thy heart." (Prov. xxiii. 1). That is, thy will. " We can make no offering," says St. Augustin, " so pleasing to God, as to say to him, take thou possession of us." We give our whole will to thee ; make known to us what thou requirest of us, and we will accomplish it.

If then we would give full pleasure to the heart of God, we must endeavour to conform ourselves to his divine will, and not only conform ourselves, but make ourselves one with all his appointments. Conformity means our joining our will with the will of God ; but uniformity means our making the divine will and our own will but one, so that we will nothing but what God wills, and God's will alone is our will. This is the summit of perfection, to which we should always aspire ; this should be the object of all our actions, of all our desires, meditations, and prayers. For this we should beg the assistance of the Saints, our advocates, of our Guardian angels, and above all, of the most holy Mother of God, who was the most perfect of all the saints, because she always most perfectly embraced the divine will.



But the great thing is, to embrace the will of God in all things which happen, whether they be agreeable or disagreeable to our inclinations. In things which are agreeable, even sinners unite themselves with the will of God; but the saints unite themselves with the divine will, even in things which are disagreeable and displeasing to self-love. In this is proved the perfection of our love for God. Father John of Avila, said, "One act of thanksgiving, when things go wrong with us, is worth a thousand thanks, when things are agreeable to our inclinations."

Moreover we should not only unite ourselves to the divine will in adverse things which come directly from God, as infirmity, desolation of spirit, poverty, the death of relatives, and the like; but in those also which come from creatures, such as contempt, loss of character, injustice, robberies, and all kinds of persecutions. When injured in reputation, honour or goods, we should consider that our Lord does not will the sin of those who injure us, but nevertheless, wills our humiliations, our poverty, or mortification. It is certain and of faith, that nothing happens in the world but by the divine will. "I am the Lord, forming the light and creating the darkness, making peace and creating evil." (Isa. xlv. 7). From the Lord come good and evil things; that is, all those things, which are contrary to us, which we falsely call evil, for in truth they are blessings when we accept them from his hands: "Shall there be evil in a city which the Lord hath not done?" saith the prophet, (Amos iii. 6). And the wise man says: "Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God." (Eccl. xi. 14.) It is true, as I

have said, that when a man unjustly offends you, God does not will his sin, nor concur in the malice of his will, but does indeed concur, by the general concurrence to the material actions with which any one afflicts you, shames, or injures you, so that the offence which you suffer is assuredly willed by Almighty God, and comes to you from his hands. Thus the Lord told David that he would be the author of those injuries which David would receive from Absalom: "I will raise up evil against thee out of thy own house, and I will take thy wives before thy face, and give them to thy neighbour" (2 Kings xii. 11). Hence he said also to the Hebrews, that in punishment of their iniquity he would send the Assyrians to carry away their spoils and to ruin them: "Woe to the Assyrian, he is the rod and staff of my anger...I will send him to take away the spoils" (Isa. x. 6). St. Augustin explains this: "Their impiety was made the sword of God." God made use of the iniquity of the Assyrians as a sword to chastise the Hebrews. And Jesus himself said to St. Peter, that his death and passion would come to him, not so much from men as from his own Father: "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (St. John xviii. 11).

When the messenger (who is thought to have been the Devil) came to tell Job that the Sabeans had taken away all his goods, and had slain his sons, what did the holy man answer? "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away" (i. 21). He did not say: the Lord gave me sons and property, and the Sabeans have taken them away; but, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;" because

he well knew that his loss had been willed by the Almighty; and hence he added: "As it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord." We should not therefore take our troubles as if they happened by chance, or came only from the malice of men, but we should be persuaded that whatever happens, happens to us by the divine will: "Know," says St. Augustin, "that whatever happens here contrary to your own will, does not happen but by the will of God." Epictetus and Athio, (*Rosweid* l. 1,) two blessed martyrs of Jesus Christ, when put to the torture by the tyrant, torn with iron hooks, and burnt with torches, only said: "May thy will, O Lord, be done in us." And when they came to the place of execution, they exclaimed aloud: "Be thou blessed, O eternal God; because thy will is fully accomplished in us."

Cesarius relates (*lib. 10. cap. 6*) that a certain religious, although he was not at all different from others externally, was yet arrived at such sanctity, that merely by the touch of his garments he healed those who were sick. His superior, wondering at this, asked him how he performed such miracles, although he did not lead a more exemplary life than others? The religious answered, that he also was surprised at it, and could not account for it. But what devotions do you practise, rejoined the Abbot? The good religious answered, that he did but little or rather nothing, except that he always took great care to will only what God willed, and that our Lord hath given him the grace of entirely giving up his own will to the will of God. Prosperity, said he, does not elate me, nor does adversity cast me down;

because I take all things as from the hands of God ; and to this end I direct all my prayers, that his will may be perfectly accomplished in me. The superior replied, did you feel no resentment against the enemy who yesterday did us so much injury, in taking away our provisions, and setting fire to our farm, and consuming our corn and cattle? No, father was his answer ; but on the contrary I gave thanks for it to God, as I am accustomed to do in similar misfortunes ; knowing that God does, or permits all for his own glory, and our greater good, and on this account I am always content, whatever happens. Hearing this, the Abbot, seeing in him such uniformity to the divine will, no longer wondered at his performing such great miracles.

He who acts thus, not only becomes a saint, but also enjoys a perpetual peace. Alphonsus the Great (*Panorm. in viti.*), King of Aragon, a most wise prince, being asked whom he esteemed to be the happiest man in the world, answered : he who gives himself up entirely to the divine will, and who receives all prosperous and adverse things as coming from the hands of God : “To them that love God all things work together unto good” (Rom. viii. 28). Those who love God are always content, because all their pleasure is to fulfil the divine will, even in adverse things, so that their very troubles are changed into delights, at the thought that by willingly accepting them they please their beloved Lord : “Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad” (Prov. xii. 21). And in fact what greater happiness can man experience than the accomplishment of all that he wishes ? Now when a person wills

only what God wills, let what will happen in the world, (except sin,) as all happens by the will of God, he has whatever he wills or desires. It is related in the lives of the Fathers, of a countryman whose lands always produced more than his neighbours, that on being asked how this happened, answered that they ought not to be surprised at it, because he always had the seasons as he wished. "How so?" they asked. "Because," he replied, "I never wish for any other weather than that what God sends me, as I will what God wills, so he gives me the crops that I desire." Souls that are resigned, says Salvian, when they are humbled, will their own humiliation: when they suffer poverty, are willing to be poor: in a word, will all that happens to them; and on this account, are always happy through life. If heat come, or cold, or rain, or wind, he who is united with the divine will says: I desire that it may be hot, or cold, or that it may rain, because it is God's will. If poverty overtake him, persecution, infirmity, or death, he says: I desire to be poor, persecuted, or infirm, because such is the will of God.

This is the glorious liberty which the sons of God enjoy, which is worth more than all the principalities and kingdoms in the world. This is the solid peace which the saints experience, which "surpasseth all understanding" (Eph. iii. 2), and all the pleasures of sense, festivals, banquets, honors, and all worldly gratifications, which, because they are vain and perishable, while they allure the senses, and delight them for a few moments, afflict the spirit, in which alone real happiness can dwell. Hence, Solomon,

after having enjoyed to the utmost all worldly delights, exclaimed in affliction: "But this also is vanity, and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. iv. 16). "A fool," says the Holy Spirit, "is changed as the moon; but a holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun" (Eccl. xxvii. 12). The fool, that is, the sinner, changes like the moon, which to-day increases, but to-morrow is on the wane—to-day he is cheerful, to-morrow sorrowful—to-day meek, to-morrow furious as a tiger—and why? Because his happiness depends upon the prosperity or adversity he may meet with, and hence he is changed as circumstances change round him. But the just man is as the sun, always equal in serenity whatever happens; because his happiness is in conformity with the divine will, and hence he enjoys an unalterable peace: "And on earth peace to men of good will" (St. Luke ii. 25), said the angels to the shepherds. And who are the men of good will, but those who are always united with the divine will, which is always sovereignly good and perfect. "The good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God" (Rom. xii. 2). It is such, because God cannot will anything but what is best and most perfect.

The saints by their uniformity to the divine will enjoyed a heaven upon earth. The ancient fathers, says St. Dorotheus, maintained within themselves a constant peace, by receiving all things as coming from the hands of God. St. Mary Magdalen, of Pazzi, at only hearing the will of God mentioned, was so consoled as to be rapt in an ecstasy of love. Adverse things will not fail to give pain to the senses, but all this will take place only in the inferior part;



but in the superior part, in the spirit, all will be peace and tranquillity, because the will will be united with the will of God: "Your joy," said our blessed Saviour to his apostles, "no man shall take from you—Your joy shall be full" (St. John xvi. 22, 24). He who is always in uniformity with the divine will, enjoys a full and perpetual peace; full, because he has all that he desires, as is said above—perpetual, because no one can deprive him of such joy, as no one can prevent whatever God wills.

Father John Thaulerus (according to *Father Sangieure Erar. tom. 3, and Father Nieremburg Vita Div.*) relates of himself, that having for many years prayed to our Lord to direct him to some one who should teach him the true way of a spiritual life, one day heard a voice which said to him: go to such a church, and you shall find the person you have asked for. He went to the church, and found at the gate a miserable beggar, barefooted and ragged, whom he saluted; saying, good day, my friend. The poor man answered: I never, sir, remember having had a bad day. The father replied: God grant you a happy life. To which the other answered: I have never been unhappy. And he added: Father, it was not by accident that I said that I had never had a bad day, because when I am hungry I praise God—when it snows or rains I bless him—if any one treats me with contempt, or drives me away, or if I meet with any other affliction, I always give glory to God. I said that I have never been unhappy, and this also is true; because I have always accustomed myself to will whatever God wills without reserve; hence, whatever happens to me,

whether sweet or bitter, I receive from his hands with gladness, as being best for me ; and this makes me happy. And if God, said Thaulerus, should will your condemnation, what would you say? If such should be the will of God, replied the beggar, I would embrace our Lord with humility and with love, and I would cling to him so closely, that if he should cast me into hell, he would be obliged to go with me, and then I should be more happy in being with him in hell, than if I enjoyed all the delights of heaven without him. Where have you found God, said the father? I found him, answered the poor man, where I left creatures. Who are you? I am a king. And where is your kingdom? Within my own soul, where I keep all things in order ; my passions obey reason, and my reason obeys God. At last Thaulerus asked him what had advanced him to such great perfection? He replied, silence ; being silent with men, in order to speak to God, and the union which I have kept up with our Lord, in whom I have found and still find all my peace. Such in a word was this poor man through his union with the divine will ; he in his poverty was assuredly richer than all the monarchs of the earth, and happier in his sufferings than worldlings in the midst of all earthly pleasures. O how great is the folly of those who resist the divine will? They must, indeed, undergo troubles, because no one can ever hinder the fulfilment of the divine decrees. "Who resisteth his will" (Rom. ix. 19)? And they must undergo them without fruit, and also bring down upon themselves greater chastisements for the next life, and greater uneasiness in this : "Who hath resisted him and hath had peace"

(Job ix. 4)? If the sick man complains in his pains and infirmities—if the poor man in his miseries laments his lot before God—if he is enraged and blasphemes, to what does it serve but to exasperate his afflictions? “What seekest thou, O man,” said St. Augustin, “when thou seekest for good things? Seek the one only good in which are all other goods.” What seekest thou out of God? Seek and find him; unite and bind thyself to his will, and thou shalt live always happy in this life, and in that to come.

And, in a word, what else does God will but our good? Whom shall we find that loves us more than God? His will is not only that no one should be lost, but that all should become saints and should be saved: “Not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance” (2 Peter iii. 9). “This is the will of God your sanctification” (1 Thes. iv. 3). God has placed his own glory in our good; because being “in his nature infinite bounty,” as St. Leo says, and bounty of its own nature desiring to diffuse itself, God has a sovereign desire to make us partakers of his goods and felicity. And if he sends us tribulations in this life, he sends them all for our good: “All things work together unto good” (viii. 28.) Even chastisements, as the holy Judith says, come not for our ruin, but for our amendment and salvation: “Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord have happened for our amendment and not for our destruction” (Judith viii. 27). Our Lord, to save us from eternal evils, surrounds with his good will: “O Lord, thou hast crowned us, as with a shield of thy good will” (Ps. v. 13). He not only desires, but is solicitous for

our welfare : "The Lord is solicitous for me" (Ps. xxxix 18). And what, says St. Paul, will ever be denied to us by God, who has given us his own Son? He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). With confidence, therefore, ought we to resign ourselves to the divine appointments, as being all for our good : "In peace, in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest : because thou, O Lord, hast singularly settled me in hope" (Ps. iv. 9, 10). Let us therefore place ourselves entirely in his hands, because he will certainly have care of us : Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you." (1 St. Peter v. 7.)

Let us then think of God, and of the fulfilment of his will, that he may think of us and of our welfare. Daughter, said our Lord to St. Catherine of Sienna, think of me and I will always think of thee. Let us frequently say with the sacred Spouse, "My beloved to me and I to him." (Cant. ii. 16.) My beloved thinks of my good; I will think of nothing else but to please him, and to unite myself in all things to his holy will. The holy Abbot Nilus said, that we should never pray to our Lord for the success of what we wish for, but for the accomplishment of his holy will in us. And when things that are adverse happen to us, let us accept them all from the hands of God, not only with patience, but with gladness, after the example of the apostles, who "went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." (Acts v. 41). What can be a

greater happiness to the soul, than when suffering any trouble, to know that by suffering it with good will, she does that which of all things is the most pleasing to God? Masters of a spiritual life tell us, that although God is pleased with the desire some souls have to suffer, and to please him, nevertheless he is more pleased with the uniformity of those who desire neither to rejoice, nor to suffer, but being entirely resigned to his holy will, desire nothing but to fulfil it.

If then you desire to please God, and to live happily in this world, unite yourselves always and in all things to the divine will. Reflect that all the sins of your past troubled and bitter life have happened because you have withdrawn yourself from the will of God. Embrace then henceforward the divine will, and say always, whatever happens to you: "Yea, father, for so hath it seemed good in thy sight" (St. Matt. xi. 26). When you are troubled with any adverse event, think that it comes from God, and say immediately: such is God's will: and with this be restored to tranquillity. "I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because thou hast done it" (Ps. xxxviii. 10). Lord, since thou hast done it, I speak not, and I accept it. To this end you should direct all your thoughts and prayers, and endeavour ever to beseech God in meditation, in the holy communion, and in visits to the blessed sacrament, to enable you to do his will. And ever offer yourself to him, saying: O my God, here I am: do with me and with all things belonging to me as thou pleasest. This was a constant practice with St. Teresa: at least fifty times in the day this saint

offered herself to our Lord, to be disposed of as should be best pleasing to him.

Happy are you, dear reader, if you always do the same ! you will certainly become a saint, you will lead a happy life and die a happy death. When any one passes to the other life, all the hope that is conceived of his salvation arises from knowing whether he died with resignation. If you embrace all things in life as coming from the hands of God, and even death to fulfil his holy will, assuredly you will die a saint, and will be saved. Let us, then, abandon ourselves in all things to the good will of that Lord, who, being most wise, knows what is best for us, and being most loving, since he has given his life for the love of us, wills also what is best for us. Let us then be certain and persuaded, says St. Basil, that God will procure our good without comparison better than we can ever do or desire.

But, let us proceed to consider in what things we should unite ourselves to the divine will.

1. We should unite ourselves with the will of God in natural things, which happen from without ; as when it is very cold, or hot, or when it rains, or in the time of scarcity, or pestilence, and the like. We should be careful not to say : what intolerable cold ! what horrible heat ! what a misfortune ! what an unhappy lot ! what a wretched season ! or to make use of any expressions which may show our repugnance to the will of God. We should will everything as it is, because God disposes all things. St. Francis Borgia, going one night to a house of the society while it snowed, knocked at the gate



many times, but the fathers being asleep did not open it. When it was day many of them lamented having made him wait thus outside the house ; but the saint told them that he had derived during the time great consolation from thinking that it was God who cast upon him the flakes of snow as they fell.

2. We should unite ourselves with the divine will in things which happen to us from within, as in hunger, thirst, poverty, desolation, and dishonour. In all we should ever say : Lord, thou doest and undoest, I am content ; I desire only what thou willest. And thus also, Rodriguez says, we should answer in those fancied cases which the devil puts into our minds, in order to make us fall into some wicked consent, or at least to disquiet us. If such a one should say to you such and such a word, if he should do such and such a thing to you, what would you say, what would you do ? We should always answer I would say, and do what God should will. And thus we should free ourselves from all fault and trouble.

3. If we have any natural defect of soul or body, such as bad memory, slow understanding, slender abilities, a deformed member, infirm health, let us not complain. What claim had we to an exemption from such defects ? What obligation was God under of giving us a more sublime intellect, or a better constructed body ? Could he not create us deformed and ugly ? Could he not leave us in our nothing ? Does he who receives a present, insist on conditions ? Let us then thank God for what he has given us through his pure bounty, and let us

be satisfied with the manner in which he has made us. Had he given us more talents, better health, or greater beauty, we might perhaps be lost. To how many has talent and learning been an occasion of perdition, by puffing them up with vanity, and exciting in them a contempt for others? To this danger they who surpass others in learning and talent are more exposed. How many others have beauty and strength of body precipitated into a thousand crimes? And, on the other hand, how many have, by means of their poverty, infirmities, and bodily deformity, become saints, and saved their souls, who, had they been rich, healthy, and beautiful, would be damned? Let us then be content with what God has given us. "But one thing is necessary" (Luke x. 22). Neither beauty, nor health, nor talent is necessary; salvation alone is necessary for us.

4. We should be particularly resigned in corporal infirmities, and should willingly embrace them in the manner and as long as God is pleased to visit us with them. We should make use of ordinary remedies for the restoration of health, because such is the will of God; but if these be of no avail, we should unite ourselves with the divine will, which will be of much more advantage to us than health. We should say on such occasions: Lord, I desire neither health nor sickness, I desire only the accomplishment of thy will. It is certainly greater virtue not to lament our afflictions in the time of pain and sickness; but when these are very heavy upon us, it is not wrong to describe them to our friends, and even to beseech God to free us from them. I mean in severe pains and sickness; because there are some

who are so defective as, on occasion of the least indisposition or fatigue, to look for pity from every one. Even Jesus Christ, when entering upon his most bitter passion, made known his sorrows to his disciples: "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death" (St. Matt. xxvi. 38); and he besought his father to deliver him from them: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me" (Ib. iii. 9). But Jesus himself taught us what we must do after such prayers, that is, resign ourselves immediately to the divine will, saying: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

How foolish is it for persons to say that they wish for health, not so much that they may not suffer, but that they do more for the service of God, by observing the rules, assisting the community, going to the church, receiving the holy communion, doing penance, studying, labouring for the salvation of souls, hearing confessions, and preaching! But I ask why do you desire to do these things? To please God. Why should you seek to please him in these things, when you know that it is not pleasing to him that you should practise your ordinary devotions, communions, penances, studies, or sermons, but that you should suffer with patience the pains and infirmities which he sends you? Unite then your sufferings with those of Jesus Christ. But it grieves me to be so useless, and such a burden to the community. Be conformed to the will of God, and be persuaded that your superiors are resigned to it, seeing that you are become a burden to the house, not through your own slothfulness, but by the will of God. Your desires and

regrets do not proceed from the love of God, but from self-love, which seeks pretexts for departing from the will of God. Do we desire to please God? Let us say, when confined to our beds, let us repeat only these words: "Let thy will be done;" by which we shall please God more than by all the devotions and mortifications we could possibly offer him. There is no better way of serving God than joyfully to embrace his holy will. The Ven. Father Avila (Epist. 2) wrote to a priest that was ill: "Friend, do not trouble yourself about the good you would be able to do if you were well, but be willing to continue ill as long as it may please God. If you seek the will of God, why should you wish to be either well or ill?" And certainly he might well say this, because God is not glorified by our works, but by our resignation and conformity to his blessed will. Hence Saint Francis of Sales also said, that God is served more by suffering than by labour.

On many occasions medical attendants or medicines will be wanting, or the doctor will not understand our disorder. On such occasions we should unite ourselves to the divine will, which disposes all these things for our good. It is related of one who was devoted to St. Thomas of Canterbury, (*l. 5. c. 1.*) that being sick he went to the tomb of the saint to obtain the recovery of his health. He recovered his health and returned into his own country; but then he said to himself: if my infirmity was of greater advantage to me for the working out my salvation, of what use will health be to me? With this thought he returned to the tomb, and besought the saint to pray to God to grant him whatever might be most

expedient for salvation ; on which he relapsed into his infirmity, and was quite content, being satisfied, that God had thus afflicted him for his greater good. SURIUS relates the same of a blind man, who had recovered his sight through the intercession of St. Vedastus, bishop ; but who afterwards prayed that, if sight were not expedient for his soul, he might become blind again, and having prayed thus, became blind as before. When then we are sick or infirm, the best we can do is neither to seek for sickness, nor for health, but give up ourselves entirely to the divine will of God, that he may dispose of us as he pleases. If we seek for health, we should always at least ask for it with resignation, and on condition that health of body be expedient for the salvation of the soul, otherwise our prayer will be defective, and will not be heard, because God does not listen to those prayers which are not accompanied with resignation.

Infirmity is the touchstone of the soul ; because infirmity or sickness discovers the character of the virtue which the soul possesses. If a person is not disquieted, does not complain, does not trouble, but obeys the medical attendants and superiors and is perfectly tranquil, and quite resigned to the divine will, it is a sign that he possesses a fund of virtue. But what is to be said of a sick person who complains, and says that he is but little attended to ? that his pains are insupportable ? that nothing does him any good ? that his physician is ignorant ? and sometimes even complains that the hand of God presses too heavily upon him ? St. Bonaventure, in the life of St. Francis, relates (c. 14.) that the saint

labouring under extraordinary sufferings, one of his Religious said to him : " Father, beg of God to deal with you more mildly, for his hand seems to press too heavily upon you." Hearing this, St. Francis answered with a loud voice : " If I did not know that what you say proceeds from simplicity, I would never see you again, for having dared to reprehend the judgments of God." Having said this, although very weak and extenuated from pain and illness, he threw himself out of bed upon the bare ground, and kissing it said : " I thank thee, O Lord, for all the sufferings which thou dost send me. I beseech thee to send me still more, if it be thy blessed will. I desire that thou shouldst afflict me and not spare me in the least ; for the accomplishment of thy will is the greatest consolation I can receive in this life."

To this we should also refer the loss which we sometimes suffer of persons who promote our temporal or spiritual advantage. Devout persons are often guilty of great defects in this point, by not resigning themselves to the divine appointments. Our sanctification must come not from our spiritual fathers, but from God. It is his will that we should avail ourselves of directors for the guidance of the soul, when he gives them to us ; but when he takes them away, he would have us to be content, and increase our confidence in his goodness, saying : Thou, O Lord, gavest me this help, and thou hast now taken it away from me, blessed for ever be thy holy will ; but do thou thyself supply my wants and teach me what I must do to serve thee. And in like manner we should accept from the hands of God whatever other crosses he is pleased to send us. But so many



sufferings, you say, are chastisements. I answer, are not the chastisements which God sends us in this life graces and benefits? If we have offended him, we must satisfy divine justice in some way, either in this life or in the next. Hence we should all say with St. Augustin: "Here cut, here burn, O Lord, provided thou spare me hereafter;" and with holy Job: "Let this be my comfort, that, afflicting me with sorrow, he spare not," (vi. 10). He who has deserved hell should indeed be consoled when he sees that God chastises him here; since this should give him great hopes that God will thereby free him from eternal punishment. Let us then say, when God sends us chastisements, what the high priest Heli said: "It is the Lord, let him do what is good in his sight," (1 Kings iii. 18.)

Again, we should be resigned in desolation of spirit. Our Lord, when a soul first gives herself to spiritual life, is accustomed to make her abounding with his holy consolations, in order to wean her from worldly delights; but when he sees her more established in spirit, he withdraws his hand to prove her love for him, and to see if she will serve him here without the reward of sensible delights. "While we live here," says St. Teresa, "our gain is not endeavouring to enjoy God, but in doing his will." And in another place; "The love of God does not consist in tenderness, but in serving him with fortitude and humility. And elsewhere: "God proves those who love him, with aridities and temptations." Let then the soul thank our Lord when he is pleased to favour her with spiritual sweetness: but let her not be afflicted and impatient when he is pleased to

leave her in desolation. We should pay great attention to this point ; because some weak souls, when they experience spiritual dryness, think that God has abandoned them, or at least that they are not suited for a spiritual life, and on this account, neglect prayer and lose the benefit of all they have done. There is no better time for the exercise of resignation to the will of God, than the time of spiritual dryness. I do not say that you may not feel pain at the loss of the sensible presence of your God ; it is impossible not to feel it, or for the soul not to lament it, when our Blessed Redeemer himself lamented it on the cross : " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " ( St. Matt. xxvii. 46 ). But under such an affliction we should resign ourselves entirely to the will of our Lord. All the saints have suffered desolation and abandonment of spirit. " What hardness of heart," said Saint Bernard " do I experience ! I no longer relish spiritual reading, nor meditation, nor prayer." For the most part, the saints have lived in a state of dryness and not of sensible consolations. These our Lord only rarely grants, and only perhaps to weaker souls, that they may not halt in spiritual advancement ; the delights of reward he prepares for us in heaven. This earth is the place of merit, where we merit by sufferings ; heaven is the place of reward and enjoyment. Hence, not sensible fervour with delight, but fervour of spirit with suffering was what the saints desired and sought for. The Ven. John of Avila said : (*Audi fl.* c. 26). " O how much better it is to be in dryness and temptation with the will of God, than in contemplation without it."

But you will say : if I knew that this desolation came from God, I should be satisfied ; but what afflicts and disturbs me is the fear that it is occasioned through my own fault, and is a punishment for my tepidity. Well, do away with tepidity, and be more diligent. But, perhaps, because you are in obscurity, you on this account are disquieted, are inclined to neglect prayer and spiritual exercises, and thus make the evil worse ? Aridity may be sent you as a chastisement, you say ; but is it not sent you by Almighty God ? Accept of it, therefore, as a chastisement which you have deserved, and attach yourself to the divine will. Do you not say that you have deserved hell ? And now why do you lament ? Is it because you deserve to receive consolation from God ? Be then satisfied with the way in which God is pleased to treat you : continue your prayers, go forward with intrepidity, and for the future be afraid lest your complaints arise from a want of humility and resignation to the will of God. When a soul goes to prayer, she cannot derive any greater advantage from it than that of union with the divine will : hence be resigned and say : O Lord, I accept this pain from thy hands and I accept it for as long as thou pleasest ; if thou shouldst will me to continue thus afflicted for all eternity, I am content. And thus, this prayer, although painful, will be of more advantage to you than the sweetest consolations.

But we should bear in mind that spiritual dryness is not always a punishment, but appointed by Almighty God for our greater good and to keep us humble. In order that St. Paul might not become

vain on account of the gifts which he had received, our Lord permitted him to be molested with temptations of impurity: "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me." (2 Cor. xii. 7.) He who prays with spiritual sweetness and delight does but little. "There is a friend, a companion at the table, and he will not abide in the day of distress." (Eccl. vi. 10.) You would not consider as your true friend him who was your companion only when a guest at your table, but him who assisted you in your troubles without any advantage to himself. When God sends obscurity and desolation, it is to prove his true friends. Palladius having suffered great dryness in prayer, went to consult Macarius, who said to him: "When the enemy tempts you to relinquish prayer, say to him: I should be content to remain here for the love of Jesus Christ, even to guard the walls of this cell." This must be your answer when you are tempted to discontinue prayer because it seems to you a loss of time. Say on such occasions: "I am here to please God." St. Francis of Sales says, that if we do nothing else in prayer but drive away distractions and temptations, we pray well. Thaulereus also says, that to him who in the time of dryness perseveres in prayer, God will grant greater graces than to him who prays much and with great sensible devotion. Father Rodriguez relates of a certain man who said that for forty years he had never experienced any consolation but in prayer; that on those days on which he prayed he felt himself strong in virtues, but that when he did not pray as usual, he felt such

weakness as to be quite incapable of anything good. St. Bonaventure and Gerson say, that many, by not having the recollection in prayer which they desire, serve God more than they would do if they had it; because this obliges them to be more diligent and humble; otherwise they might become negligent and proud at the thought of having found what they sought. And what is said of spiritual dryness, may be said also of temptations. We must endeavour to avoid temptations; but if God wills that we should be tempted, or permits it, either against faith or purity, or any other virtue, we must not lament, but in this also resign ourselves to the divine will. To St. Paul, when he prayed to be delivered from impure temptations, our Lord replied: "My grace is sufficient for thee." And thus, when God does not grant our petitions to be delivered from the temptations which molest us, let us say: Lord, do and permit what thou plearest; thy grace is sufficient for me, but give me thy assistance that I may never forfeit it. It is not temptations, but consent to them, that robs us of divine grace. Temptations, when we resist them, keep us more humble, acquire for us greater merit, induce us to have more frequent recourse to God, and thus preserve us at a greater distance from offending him, and unite us more intimately to his holy love.

Finally, we should unite ourselves with the will of God as regards our death, both as to the time and manner in which God shall appoint its arrival. St. Gertrude, (*l. 1. Vita. c. 11.*) one day ascending a hill lost her footing and fell into a valley. Her companions asked her if she was not afraid of dying

without the sacraments? To whom the saint answered: I have a great desire to die with the sacraments, but I leave it all to the will of God, because the best dispositions for a good death, is willingly to submit to whatever God shall appoint for us; hence I desire whatever kind of death our Lord shall be pleased to send me.' St. Gregory relates in his Dialogues, (l. 3, c. 27,) that the Vandals having condemned a certain priest named Santolus to death, gave him permission to choose what kind of death he pleased. The holy man refused to choose, and said: I am in the hands of God, and will receive whatever death he shall permit you to inflict upon me; I desire no other but that. This act was so pleasing to our Lord, that these barbarians, having resolved on beheading him, the arm of the executioner was arrested in the act of striking; and these men being moved by such a miracle, granted him his life. Therefore, as regards the manner, we must regard as the best kind of death, that which God has appointed for us. Let us always say when we think of our death: save us, O Lord, and then order our death as thou pleasest.

So also should we unite ourselves with the divine will as to the time of our death. What is this earth, but a prison in which we suffer, and are in continual danger of losing God? This made David exclaim: "Bring my soul out of prison." (Psalm cxli. 8.) This made St. Teresa sigh for death. When she heard the clock strike, she was filled with consolation, at the thought that another hour of her life was past, another hour of the danger of losing God. Father Avila said, that every one who was



not in improper dispositions ought to desire death on account of the danger, during life, of losing the divine grace. What can be more desirable and delightful than to secure for ourselves, by a good death, the impossibility of losing the grace and favour of God? But, you say, I have as yet done nothing, and have acquired nothing for my soul. But if God should will you to die now, what would you do afterwards, if you should live contrary to the will of God? Who knows whether you would then make that happy end for which you hope for? Who knows whether you would not change your will, fall into other sins, and be lost? And then if you should do nothing else, as long as you lived, you would not be able to live without committing sins, at least light ones. "Why then," exclaims St. Bernard, "why do we desire life in which, the longer we live, the more we sin?" And it is certain that only one venial sin is more displeasing to God, than all the good works we can perform are pleasing to him.

I say, moreover: that he who has but little desire of heaven, shows that he has but little love for God. He who loves, desires the presence of his beloved; but we cannot see God, if we do not leave the earth; and hence the saints have sighed for death, that they might go and behold their beloved Lord; thus sighed St. Augustin: "Would that I might die, that I might see thee;" thus St. Paul: "Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Phil. i. 23" thus David: When shall I come and appear before the face of God? Ps. xli. 3; and thus also all those souls that love God. A certain author relates, (Felores Ernel Graul. 4.c. 68,) that a gentleman going one day

to hunt in a forest, heard a man singing most sweetly; he stopped, and found a poor leper half putrefied: he asked him if it was he who had been singing? Yes, replied the leper, it was I who was singing. And how could you be singing and content under so many afflictions and pains which are taking away your life? The leper answered: Between me, sir, and God, there is nothing but this wall of clay, which is my body; remove this impediment, and I shall enjoy my God, and seeing that it is daily falling to pieces, I rejoice and sing.

Lastly, we should unite ourselves with the divine will as to our degrees of grace and glory: we should indeed esteem those things which belong to the glory of God, but we should esteem his will more; we should desire to love him more than the Seraphim; but we should not desire any degree of love, but that which our Lord has determined to bestow upon us. Father Avila says: (*Audi filia*, c. 23) "I do not believe that any of the saints did not desire to be better than what they were, but this did not disturb their peace, because they did not desire it from mere selfish motives, but for the sake of God, with whose distribution they were content, although he had given them less: esteeming it true love to be content with what God had given them, without desiring to have more. This means, as Rodriguez explains it, (*tract.* 8, cap. 30,) that although we ought to be diligent in endeavouring to attain perfection as far as we are able, in order that we may not make our tepidity and laziness serve as excuses as some do, who say: God must give it us: I can only do so much; nevertheless, when we fall short, we should not lose our

peace of mind and uniformity with the divine will which has permitted our defect, nor lose courage; we should arise immediately from our fault, and humbly repent; and seeking greater help from God, pursue our course. Thus in like manner, although we may desire to be exalted in heaven to the choirs of the Seraphim, not indeed that we may have greater glory, but to give greater glory to God, and to love him the more; yet we should be resigned to his holy will, contenting ourselves with that degree which in his mercy he shall deign to bestow on us.

May the divine will be for ever loved and praised.  
Praise to the immaculate Virgin Mary.

A GOLDEN BOOK;  
 OF  
 THE THREE TABERNACLES,  
 POVERTY, HUMILITY, AND PATIENCE.

---

TO THE READER.

*In these three tabernacles are encamped three military virtues.  
 In the first POVERTY, in the second HUMILITY, in the  
 third PATIENCE.*

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TABERNACLE OF POVERTY

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CHAPTER I.

*On the diversified trial of the elect.*

It is written in the prophet: *The patience of the poor will not  
 perish unto the end.*

Great, O Lord my God, is the patience of thy servants. And this is the victory of those who overcome all adverse things in this world: for thou hast said: In your patience ye will possess your souls. *Luke xxi.* Thou diversely triest us, and thou dost encompass us on all sides with tribulations, at one time from without, at another from within; thou searchest us now by open, and now by hidden temptations; so that nothing may be in us, that has not passed through the fire of temptation.

Thou art willing to try us in all things, to strengthen us in many things, that being tried in all, and freed from many miseries, we may return great thanks to thy mercy and to thy goodness.

This is pleasing to thee, and appeareth good in thy sight, and useful to our advancement; and if thou, O Lord our God, be for us, who can be against us?

I shall therefore follow thee, O Lord, whithersoever thou wilt go, so that thou be my guide on the way. If I shall walk in the midst of the shadow of death, no evils shall I fear, because thou art with me.

Yet will I confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and my weakness I will not hide: if so be, that I happily receive from a kind physician the cherishings of a consolation. Look, O Lord, on my poverty and my weakness: hearken to what I say, for unto thee have I made known my case.

Behold, I wish for rest, and thou commandest me to labour; I pant after lofty things, but thou dost propose to me what is humble; I seek after a store of delights, but thou counellest the distresses of poverty.

Is this, O Lord my God, thy advice and thy word?

*Lord.* It is.

*Soul.* And how am I straitened, that it be perfected in me?

*Lord.* Love me, and thou wilt not be straitened in thyself. It is easy that all the distresses of poverty be consumed in the fire of charity.

It is sweet to the lover to be impoverished with

the Son of God. Charity maketh every burden light that it commands us to carry. Nor will labour be hard to any one that is strengthened by the bread of charity.

*Soul.* O Lord, thou hast spoken well, and I beg that it be done as thou hast spoken it. Thou hast given us the counsel, give us likewise thy assistance. May whatever appears burdensome to the flesh become sweet, and the burden itself light, which before seemed too heavy to be borne.

May my flesh rejoice in the living God, and my spirit in God, its salvation. *O Israel, how good is God to those who have an upright heart.*

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength, my stay, and my refuge; I likewise will love holy poverty, humility, and patience, by following thy footsteps, and those of thy saints.

I will consider henceforward poverty as my riches, humility as my glory, and patience as my rest.

May I attend to those things, and may every thing that is useful to the spirit become pleasant, because the flesh availeth nothing.

May I be delighted in those things as in the greatest riches, and may the foot of the proud rich, and of those who live in delights, never disturb me.

For these shall fall when their day will come, and their end will be without honour. But I will rejoice in the Lord, and will greatly delight in God my Saviour, who is become to me an example of poverty, of humility, and of patience.



## CHAPTER II.

*Of the three tabernacles of Christ, of Moses, and of Elias; or of the three virtues, humility, patience, and poverty.*

Contemplating in thee, O Lord, and in some of thy servants the above virtues, I find *thee* to be the most humble of all; Moses thy servant to be very patient; and Elias to have been extremely poor.

I also recollect that they have appeared with thee on the mountain, and that St. Peter said: *Lord, if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.*

In these three Tabernacles I behold these three virtues in which I choose to dwell. If I shall say that my Lord will dwell in the tabernacle of humility, what is more certain? *Learn of me* (he says), *for I am meek and humble of heart.* Therefore, thy tabernacle, O Lord, is *humility*, in which the Holy Ghost truly resides. Hence it is written: *In whom shall I reside, unless in the humble and peaceable—in him who feareth my words?*

In what tabernacle did Moses dwell? If I consider his meekness, doubtless his tabernacle was *Patience*. *Moses*, says the Holy Scriptures, *was the most meek of all men who lived upon earth.* This tabernacle was made according to the model that was shown on the mountain, where the Lord said: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth.*

Elias is already come, let us go and see where he dwells: now if I observe his poverty and abstinence, his poverty will answer: I am his Tabernacle. The great Elias, the prophet, dwelt in the tabernacle of

*poverty*; witness the ravens that fed him, the cave in which *he lay hid*, the coarseness of the garment that covered him, the angel of the Lord that served him with water and bread, mingled with ashes. *How good it is for us to be here*, how pleasant it is to dwell in these tabernacles!

O that I could merit to become even as one of the lowest in the number of thy servants, and find a place in thy house. How happy should I be, if among so many precious tabernacles, I could build myself a small one, where the Lord would condescend to visit me, and make it his habitation. I know that the Lord and king of Heaven chooses to dwell in these virtues.

Now speak, O Lord, for thy servant heareth; show me, according to the multitude of thy mercies, the sanctity of *poverty*, the grace of *humility*, and the fortitude of *patience*.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *A pious recommendation of poverty.*

*Christ.* Because thou desirest to be consoled in my words, and instructed in the practice of these three virtues, I will willingly grant what thou requirest. But as poverty is the foundation of these virtues, we shall treat of it in the first place.

Let blessed poverty, which I consider as a special degree of holiness, be deeply impressed in thy heart. I have heard thy moans, how deeply poverty distressed thee; but thy moans displease me; this conduct which I hear of thee is wrong.

Is it not poverty I have chosen, and to it have

given a particular place in my treasures? Rise and go with the shepherds to Bethlehem, behold *the word made flesh*, see was poverty wanting there. Behold my poverty, compare it to thy own, and thine will appear but little, perhaps none at all. A large chasm is placed between thy poverty and mine.

For when I was rich and wanted nothing, I blushed not to become poor and indigent on thy account; but thou, who art poor and naked, who broughtest nothing into the world, shouldst thou not reflect on this?

Therefore let thy complaints cease; if thou examinest my poverty, I think it should be a sufficient motive to engage thee to love thy own.

It is not in this world but in the next thou shouldst think of joys and treasures, for there the poor shall eat and be filled, and all those who seek me in holy poverty shall praise my name.

It is not the lot of the servants of God to rejoice in the good things of this world, and conform to its pomps; but despising its charms, they should recur to the sweets of my holy poverty.

My poverty is a real delight to those in whose hearts the riches of the world seem vile.

Perhaps thou wouldst, like the rich man, be clad in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day; beware, lest, like him, thou be cast into Hell, and eternally tormented; for my judgments are, that the works of every man shall follow him.

This one thing is necessary, that thou suffer poverty with patience here, or that thou be excluded from the number of my poor hereafter.

I have pointed out to the poor the road to Heaven;

I have opened its gate to those who labour and knock at it; I have shown the humble the door of my kingdom, and the rich shall with difficulty enter therein. Wouldst thou behold the person that enters? open thine eyes and see.

*It happened that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom?* is this an agreeable vision?

*Dis.* Agreeable indeed, and earnestly to be wished for; but how did he ascend to Heaven, and who can follow him thither? .

*Christ.* Remember, my son, that Lazarus was full of ulcers, and oppressed with misery; that hungry and thirsty he lay before the door of the rich man. And he who suffered so much for my sake, was he not worthy to enter my kingdom?

Imitate him if thou wilt; for if he have pleased me, it is because his poverty and patience pleased me first; go thou and do likewise.

Verily I say unto thee, that unless thou be converted, and become like Lazarus, or like one of my little ones, thou shalt not be assumed into Heaven by my angels.

No man shall enter unless he be pure. If he be unclean, my Father shall purify him in the crucible of poverty; the water of temptation shall cleanse him, and thus being purified, after death he shall enter into the camp of my saints.

Hast thou understood all these things?

*Dis.* Yes, O Lord.

*Christ.* And now, what shall I say unto thee? The hour is come when many will not receive this sound doctrine, but will adopt whatever they think

most pleasing and agreeable. But it is not thus thou hast studied Jesus Christ, whose poverty is laid before thine eyes. Yet hear again what I shall say unto thee. O poverty, my most familiar friend, whom I have loved so much upon earth, and whom I so strongly recommended to my followers, thou art become so odious that scarcely is there a spot left whereon thou canst rest thy foot.

If sometimes thou seemest to dwell with a few, as soon as they behold greater pleasures, though in reality more abject and of less worth than thee, they cry out: Withdraw from us, we reject thy lessons, they are contrary to our desires; thy ways are difficult, and thy paths are thorny; why hast thou come to us? is it to kill us, and destroy our cattle? Their flesh and blood they call their cattle.

Behold, O poverty, how they treat thee and detract from thy merit; yet I know thou hast meditated no harm against them, but by my orders thou hast approached them to heal their wounds, and nourish whatever virtues they might have had.

Far otherwise did that saint think, who said: *Thou hast prepared in my sight a table against those who disturb me; thou hast in thy goodness, O God, prepared it for the poor.* And again, he joyfully sings: *Because I am poor and needy; and: The poor and needy shall praise thy name.*

However, poverty is my friend; be not dejected; it is not thee they have rejected, but me; for whosoever despiseth thee, despiseth me; and whosoever cherisheth thee, cherisheth me. I know thou art loved but by a few, and that sometimes thou art shunned with indignation.

Thus thou art treated, because they know thee not, and because they are ignorant how great is thy merit in my sight. But fear not, for I have chosen thee, I have purchased thee, and consider thee more precious than all riches, and sweeter than all pleasures. From my infancy have I sought for thee, and in my old age I have not abandoned thee.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

*A recommendation of poverty from the example of Christ and of his saints.*

*Christ.* O all ye who pass by, stop and see if there be poverty equal unto mine. Ye daughters of Sion, come forward now, and behold the King with that diadem with which his mother crowned him. How she laid in a manger him who enjoyed his Father's power, and wrapped in swaddling clothes him who holds Heaven and Earth in the palm of his hand.

Behold my dress and garments with which I am covered, and if ye see poverty equal unto mine, reject both me and it.

Behold the sign which I have shown you; what has been announced by angels has appeared on earth. It has been accomplished by the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem, as you may witness.

How long, ye little ones, will ye refuse to love poverty, as a little one is born for you and given to you.

But these things seem folly to the rich, and infamy to the proud; but to me and to all my elect they are wisdom, they are glory.

Consider, I beseech you, these other actions of



mine. I have fasted forty days and forty nights, eating nothing in all that time, and then I became hungry; behold what I have done. This fast I have chosen, and in fact accomplished: who could recompense me for this labour, and who endeavours to imitate me in the smallest manner? whosoever he be, he is my beloved.

Tired by a journey, I rested near a well. I asked a Samaritan woman for a draught of water; I said: *Give me to drink.* Behold, I, who gave wine to man, and formerly changed water into wine, now ask for a draught of water myself.

My disciples went into the city to buy provisions, and on their return said: Master, eat. These things they administered to me as if suffering through necessity, that the poverty which I assumed for the salvation of man might be made known to all. And now, if you love me, follow my example, for I shall show you greater things than these.

In short, poor and naked, I hung upon the cross, during my entire life I possessed but little, and destitute of all I expire on the cross. Who is poorer than me, stripped of all human consolation?

This should be deeply engraven in your hearts, this should be your constant meditation, because it may lead you to the love of holy poverty.

Behold, O poverty, my friend, by what words and examples have I extolled thee; and now to whom shall I compare thee? Thou art like men rejoicing in the Holy Ghost, and saying: *We are as those who, having nothing, but possessing all. As those in want, yet enriching others. We are infirm, we are ignoble on Christ's account. We esteem all things*

*as dung, that we may gain Christ.* How exact the similitude; would to God it were to be found in many.

I remember my servant Francis, whose greatest delight was holy poverty; a servant truly faithful, whose love for poverty was so great, that he called her *his only mistress*; and as he loved her, he loved and served her to the end of his life.

Therefore he joyfully reigns in my kingdom, because while on earth he joyfully embraced that poverty that led him to it; when meeting her, he cheerfully saluted her in these words: *Welcome, poverty, my mistress; welcome, chastity and obedience.*

Poverty, and her two sisters just mentioned, were the solemn vows of his religion. This have I told you of the humble Francis.

Will you now be informed of other saints whose poverty is renowned throughout the world?

St. Martin, the holy Bishop of Tours, loved poverty with that devotion as to merit the title of *Martin the poor and indigent*. Despise him not in his poverty, for it is the joy of the saints. Hence the church sublimely sings in his praise: *Martin is joyfully received into Abraham's bosom; Martin, the poor and necessitous, is rich in the kingdom of Heaven, he is honoured with Heavenly hymns. Poor and necessitous!* how harsh the terms, but how sweet the reward.

I shall propose to you another faithful servant, a great lover of holy poverty; Augustine, the renowned doctor and zealous bishop, of whom the church sings: *He made no will, because as one of Christ's poor he had nothing to bequeath.* And again: *The poor shall praise thee, thou lover of poverty.*

These are illustrious bishops ; poor in spirit, poor in substance, but rich in virtue, and opulent in merit.

Many other advocates for poverty could I mention, but let these suffice, lest a longer detail might be burdensome.

*Dis.* Why does my Lord speak thus ? I desire to hear him mention others, for whatever he shall say cannot be burdensome to his servant. Who are the others, and what were their names ?

*Christ.* They are my elect, my chosen friends ; holy men, ancient inhabitants of the Desert, Paul, Anthony, Macarius, Pachomius, Arsenius, Alexis at Rome, and John the alms-giver, whose names are written in the book of life ; and many others of whom St. Gregory the Pope makes mention.

The life of these is a model to all, and the Church of the Saints shall celebrate their praise.

In those poverty rejoiced, humility shone, and patience triumphed.

With these I recommend the example of St. Elizabeth the widow, whose life and holy actions should excite thee to imitate her virtues ; like her, despise the world and its pleasures, that thou mayest become a lover of holy poverty, and obtain the rewards annexed to it.

Now to you, O poor, I address my words, and whoever is poor for the sake of Christ, let him listen. To you, O rich, I have much to say and much to censure, but you will hear me not.

Hear me ye poor ; to you I speak, for you are my sheepfold. *Fear not, my little flock, for it has pleased my Father to give you a kingdom.* Here

you lead a life in poverty, but great shall be your riches if in poverty you love me. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because it is to announce good tidings to the poor I came to the world.

When in the world I loved poverty, and despised riches, because they belonged not to my Father, but to the lovers of the world.

Whoever desires to become rich in this world, falls into the snares of the devil and the unlawful desires of the heart, and with difficulty can he enter the kingdom of Heaven.

*For my kingdom is not of this world.* If my kingdom was of this world, my ministers would have served me and stood by me with a great army; now my kingdom is not here, but I may become thy servant and minister of the whole world; *for I came not to be served, but to serve, and to lay down my life for the redemption of many.*

Hearken unto me, ye poor, and hear my words, because in poverty I am gone before you.

Esteem your poverty in Christ as real riches. Exult and rejoice in it, because your reward is great in Heaven; be courageous, and fear not, for it is I who am speaking to you.

Act manfully and be strengthened, you who have contracted an alliance with poverty, if you remain with it, I shall remain with you.

Be neither sad nor dejected because you are poor, but rejoice in the Lord that you despised riches, and in their stead have adopted the poverty of Christ.

O holy and blessed poverty, with what praises can I proclaim thee, by what name shall I call thee, and by what means shall I recommend thee to my

friends? O what an example have I left to those who become poor for me, when I became poor and indigent for them!

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## CHAPTER V.

### *The affinity and connection of Poverty with Humility.*

*Christ.* I fear thou art a stranger to the hearts of many; come, therefore, and I will send thee to a well-beloved daughter of mine.

Go forth therefore a little time and dwell with her, until the time of thy visitation shall come; and in the day of thy visitation thou shalt be great and sublime. Thou shalt not be desolate, but beloved; thou shalt be a crown of glory and a precious diadem in the hand of thy God. Then shalt thou shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of my Father, and beautiful as the moon in my sight.

In the meantime, thou shalt suffer much for my name, and through many tribulations shalt thou enter the kingdom of Heaven. But be not dismayed, for I am with thee in tribulation; I shall deliver thee and glorify thee.

Go forward, then, by my counsel to the place I shall appoint thee; I know the mistress of that place will joyfully receive thee on my account. I know her pious and holy conversation will exceedingly please thee; without thee she cannot be completely happy, and without her thou canst not long subsist. Arise then, my friend, my beloved *Poverty*, and come.

*Poverty.* Lord, whither shall I go, and who will show me the way?

*Christ.* Through *me* thou shalt pass, and soon arrive at her habitation, *for I am the way.*

*Poverty.* And what is the name, O Lord, of this thy holy friend in whose favour I have heard so much? Tell me, that rising I may pass to her with speed. And when I shall arrive I will salute her thus; Thou art the blessed daughter of the Lord; rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Sion; the Lord himself has sent me unto thee.

*Christ.* Why dost thou, O Poverty, require her name? Her name is great in my sight, and much renowned among my servants; she is called *Humility.*

Her name is venerable to men and angels, and it is written of *thee*: Poverty in pious minds is the guardian of Humility. Behold, O Poverty, this is the personage of whom I spake to thee. I have loved her from the beginning, even as thee; protect this humility, the brightest ornament of my saints.

I will not that thou forsake her; for one more like thyself in all the land thou canst not find, nor one with whom thou canst more safely dwell.

All abandon thee, all despise thee; but true humility will give thee a welcome reception: you are near relations, and therefore ought to dwell together.

That poverty is not blessed that knows not humility, nor is humility pleasing that despises poverty.

Let then your hearts be one, and yourselves united; have no separate property, but let all be common to both; your food, your raiment, and every other necessary of life equally suit you. Thy garment, O *Poverty*, is often coarse and mean, but



cast it not away, lest thou offend thy friendly relation *Humility*.

By these external marks thy inward quality is made known. A modest dress, though poor, denotes an humble heart.

To blush at the poverty of dress betrays a latent pride, and to glory in it is the pride of hypocrites.

Thy shoes are old, and sometimes broken; but *Humility* in these is not ashamed to walk, for many saints have gone bare-footed.

Isaiah, the prophet, says, that the Lord told him: *Go and strip the sackcloth from thy loins, and take the sandals from thy feet. And he did so, going naked and bare-footed.* Behold a witness sufficient to prove this truth.

Thy table, O Poverty, is content with simple food, and what is barely necessary; in this *Humility* rejoices, and partakes of as a sober but cheerful guest.

*Poverty. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound (everywhere, and in all things am I instructed), both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all in him that strengtheneth me.*

*Christ.* Whoever shall read these words, will reflect that poverty is condescending and indulgent, to the weak and infirm; but to the strong and robust she has other lessons to propose; hence she has been accustomed from her youth to labours and fatigues; nor has she eat the bread of idleness, that the words of the apostle might be fulfilled, who says: *I have been a burden to none, but in labour day and night I have eat my bread.* And the same in many other places.

*Humility*, the hand-maid of *Poverty*, complains of many by the mouth of the Prophet, that *they are not in the labours of men*, and therefore, he adds, *pride took possession of them*. And the master of the vineyard in the gospel, on seeing men idle in the market-place, reprimands them thus: *Why do ye stand here the whole day idle? Go ye into my vineyard, and whatever is just I will give you.*

*Poverty* takes her rest on uneasy beds; on straw, on boards, and sometimes on stones. *Humility* rejects silken couches and beds of down; nor has she contracted the least intimacy with the luxuries of life or riches of the world; she has read that John the Baptist was clothed with nothing but *camel's hair and a girdle of leather*. And again she has heard of me, that *foxes have dens, and the fowls of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*

*Poverty* has neither man-servants nor maid-servants; neither palaces nor stately buildings, neither lawns nor fine gardens, nor any of these things adapted to the comforts or ease of life; the possession of such would tarnish her venerable name.

*Humility* neither has nor desires to have these things, but wishing to imitate the Son of God, she says: *I come to serve, and not to be served.* I am the handmaid of Christ, it is not lawful I should become the mistress; my only care is, that the servitude of my Master may appear in his servant.

I, who am determined to serve the Creator alone, how can I relish, even for a moment, the frail, transitory, and perishable goods of a vain and inconstant world? No, no, far from me and from my

house be all these superfluities, and all who admire them.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### *A Consolation in Poverty.*

*Christ.* Know then, my beloved *Poverty*, that *Humility* alone will gladly receive thee. Thou art unknown to all others, and I believe shalt long remain so; but be not dejected, for I have lived unknown to many. *If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute thee*; if they have hated me, thou wilt be hated also.

Remember the words I have said: *The disciple is not above his Master*. Thy fortitude and consolation shall be in *Humility* and patience.

*Poverty.* Behold thy handmaid, be it unto me according to thy word! Thou, O Lord, hast spoken to me, and whence this condescension that I have found such favour in thy sight? How rich art thou in mercy! Thou receivest a stranger; thou dost comfort a widow and relieve her who was desolate.

My heart exulteth with joy that thou deignest to look on the disconsolate; the most sublime Majesty to notice her who is humbled and trampled under foot! The King of kings and Lord of lords condescends to love his handmaid *Poverty*! O the riches of his mercy, the abundance of his goodness, the excess of his charity!

Much would it have been to have ever thought on me, and to have sent one of his lowest servants for my consolation; but far more; he himself has

risen from his sacred throne; he changed his regal robes for a coarse raiment; he put on the dress of poverty; he assumed the person of a servant; and not only of a servant, but of a servant poor and contemptible, that he might suffer for many. *He in whose mouth no deceit was found*, who owed nothing to death, submitted even to the death of the cross!

In all things has he conformed to my state, in food and raiment, in want and indigence; in youth and manhood; in life and at his death; in parentage and kindred.

Great therefore is my consolation, and firm my confidence in Jesus Christ. *Be consoled, be consoled, my people*, says the Lord your God.

Who are the children of God, if not the poor? The rich of this world are not his people.

Wo be to you, O rich, who here enjoy consolation. Therefore Christ has said: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *See therefore that you despise not one of these little ones who believe in me*, and have made themselves poor on my account.

For the Lord hath said: *I am the Father of the poor; the Judge of the orphan and widow. I have heard the desire of the poor; my ear hath heard the preparation and humility of their heart.*

Touch them not; neither through fraud nor violence do them any injury; I am the avenger of all; therefore, neither thwart nor disturb them, for all the poor are mine.

And now, my poor, have you not heard my voice? behold the manifold testimonies I have given you in favour of *Poverty*, my best beloved friend.

I call her my *friend*, because of my free will I have made her so, that all the kings and princes of the world may learn not to despise her, but to venerate and esteem her as my best beloved, whom the King of Heaven and earth has sanctified in his infancy.

If you believe not my words, believe at least my works ; go then and see where the Lord was laid ; behold his cradle, behold his sepulchre.

Am I not Christ who speak to you. Feel and see that I have neither riches nor pleasures, but poverty and afflictions. Will you now believe that I am not rich but poor ? and if I be poor can you despise my poverty ?

Let these reflections suffice to induce you to a love of that poverty that Christ has sanctified by his example, that all his saints have embraced, and that all who love the riches of eternal life have preferred to the vain and transitory pleasures and possessions of this world.

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## OF THE SECOND TABERNACLE, THAT IS OF HUMILITY.

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### CHAPTER VII.

*Of the documents and examples of humility delivered  
by Christ.*

Let us now consider the virtue of humility. Great as the merit of poverty may be, it cannot be pleasing to God without humility.

*Dis.* As thou hast spoken of poverty to thy servant, deign, O Lord, to speak also of humility. I find that virtue strongly recommended in thy Scriptures, and have read that it has been the leading feature in all thy actions.

Who, therefore, can teach true humility, and show its value, like the Son of God made man? Thou openly declarest to all: *Learn of me; for I am meek and humble of heart.*

Had I no other example of humility but thyself, O Lord, nor any other motive to practise it, that alone would be sufficient. Whom should I follow, if not thee? What should I believe, if not thy words? Who could persuade me that humility is the direct road to Heaven, if not he who came from Heaven for the express purpose of conducting mankind thither?

How long, my soul, wilt thou continue to wander through crooked paths, always straying, and never arriving at the direct road?

Behold, humility is the way, and there is no other, *I am*, he says, *the way, the truth, and the life.*

Be humble, be meek, O my soul, and Christ will exalt thee. Mind not what others shall say to thee, or of thee, but attend to the words of Christ, who says to the humble: *Fear not, my little flock, for it has pleased my Father to grant you a kingdom.*

Again, exulting in the Holy Ghost, he thus addresses his Father: *I confess thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and of earth; because thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent (of this carth), and hast revealed them unto little ones. Even so, O Father, because it has pleased thee.*



What seemeth to thee of Christ—of whom is he the Son? Truly this man was the Son of God. If he chose to have nothing in common with the world, what is it that you choose to have or love in it? Beware, lest he should say to you: *You are of the world.*

When Christ was as yet with his disciples, and the hour of his passion was approaching, wishing to leave them an example of perfect humility and mutual love, *he rises from his last supper, lays by his garment, puts water into a basin, and begins to wash his disciples' feet, saying: Know ye what I do for you? You call me your Lord and master, and you say right, for I am so. If I, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, so ought you to wash each other's feet; I have given you an example, that you may do the same.*

O rare example of humility! Behold, God becomes the servant of man, and man refuses his obedience, not only to his superior, but even to his God! Let all the proud be ashamed and confounded, who despise the counsel of God.

Thou hast conquered us by thy humility; behold, we are confounded in our pride, confusion has covered our face.

*Christ.* What could I have done for thee, O proud man, that I have not done? Why dost thou look on me? Dost thou think thyself my superior? If thou didst not think so, perhaps thou wouldst have humbled thyself, but I see thy pride is obstinate.

Be converted, ye children of men, and exalt not yourselves, for if you do, I am not with you; if ye exalt yourselves, you will fall before your enemies,

and they shall trample on you, and you shall know that I resist the proud.

*Humble, then, yourselves before my powerful hand, and I will exalt you. Whoever will humble himself shall be exalted; and whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled.* How many would have ascended, but through pride have sunk like a stone into the deep?

The rebel angel and his apostate host were cast out of Heaven; who, ascending on the wings of pride, have been hurled down into the bottomless pit.

*Dis.* Lord, Lord, who can subsist before the face of thy fury? Thou hast cast them down whilst they were ascending: it is fallen, the proud Babylon is fallen, and great is the ruin thereof.

But what shall I a sinner do? whither shall I fly? With fear and trembling I see that God spares neither men nor angels in their pride; wo to me if I exalt myself, wo to me if I be not humble.

Who, then, will show me the road through which I may safely travel?

*Christ.* *I am the way; whoever shall enter through me shall be saved.* Pass unto me, all you who desire me, and the scandal of the proud shall not be your lot. *I am the light of the world: whosoever followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* I am the rule of virtue, I am the example of humility. I am the good shepherd, who feed my sheep; I have fed them in the innocence of my heart, and in my words I have strengthened them.

*Dis.* Lord, who feedest me from my youth, do not abandon me; let thy good spirit conduct me into the right land; for the sake of thy name en

liven me in humility; it is humility that can save my soul and rescue it from the misfortunes of eternity. If I be humble, I shall be saved; *remember me, O Lord*, says the humble and contrite thief, *when thou shalt come into thy kingdom*: and Jesus said unto him: *Verily, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*. O how great is the merit of humility, which opened the gates of Heaven for him who was a robber. *Where art thou Adam? Lord*, he says, *I heard thy voice, and was afraid because I was naked*.

Wretch, who hath stripped thee, unless thy pride? The prince of pride has said to thee and Eve: *You shall be like gods*.

*Iniquity hath lied to itself*. And Adam, and all his children became wretched and miserable; they found nothing of the divinity to which they aspired by the serpent's temptation; but in its stead they found labours, troubles, and anxieties.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*Whilst pride endeavoureth to ascend, it falleth.*

Preferable then is the thief in his humility to Adam in his pride; humility exalteth the one, pride pulled down the other.

Adam, aspiring to become like God, fell from his happy state; *he fell even into the hands of robbers who plundered him*; plundered him of his innocence, and almost of all the riches he inherited from his Maker. Pride, for want of stooping, tumbleth headlong. It fell in Heaven, it fell on earth, it fell in every abyss.

Christ descended, from Heaven even he descended; and it is he that ascendeth above all the Heavens, that he might fulfil all things.

Good Lord, how thou fightest for me on all sides! *Thou pullest down the proud and powerful from their seat, and exaltest the humble.* Thou hast said: Zacheus, hastily descend, because this day it becometh me to remain in thy house; and quickly he descended, and was made a child of Abraham.

*Lord, descend before my son shall die;* thus prayed a certain ruler; and Jesus said unto him: *Go, thy son liveth.*

Thou, O Lord, hast descended to save mankind that perished by ascending.

And why are we all so desirous of ascending, and so unwilling to descend?

*Master,* said another, *I shall follow thee wherever thou shalt go.* He said right; *I shall follow thee;* for in following thee no man can err. Thou art the light of the world, and whoever walketh in the day hurteth not his foot. *Wheresoever thou shalt go, I shall follow thee,* whether thou ascendest or descendest, for thou hast taught me both.

The ascent to Heaven is great indeed; willingly thither will I ascend, because my treasure is there, and because the nuptials of the Lamb are there solemnized.

The great festival day of the saints is nearly approaching; *ascend to this festival, go and say to my brethren: I ascend to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God.*

*Who shall ascend to this mountain, and who shall stand in his holy place? He who hath innocent hands and a clean heart.*

A mountain of this magnitude is not to be seen by those who adhere to the earth; but John, who was raised on the wings of contemplation, saw the Lamb standing on the mountain of Sion; whom the Prophet, wishing to follow, cried out: *Who will give me wings like a dove, that I may fly and be at rest?*

Peter also ascended, and exclaimed: *Lord, it is good for us to be here!*

These holy men, O Lord and Saviour, have followed thee, and thou hast shown them a glimpse of that glory which thou reservest for those who love thee.

This is the ascent to which we are invited, and which every man gaineth who deems the world vile and unworthy of his attachment.

But the present is the time of descending; *Let down the Heavens, O Lord, and descend; touch the mountains of pride and they shall smoke.*

Descend to us, for we are unable to ascend to thee; if we attempt it, we fail; when we ascend a little, we take a crooked path; we do worse, we fall and stick fast in the mire.

As well might the lame run swiftly, or the broken-legged walk erect, as the proud man advance to Heaven.

The more he would rise, the lower he falls; the higher he attempts to leap, the deeper he sinks in the mire.

*Christ. If thou buildest thy nest in Heaven, O proud man, from thence I shall pull thee down, saith the Lord.*

We have heard of the pride of Moab, proud he is

in the extreme, his pride and arrogance are greater than his fortitude. *Why art thou proud, O dust and ashes? Remember man, thou art but dust, and into dust thou shalt return.*

Descend first, and then thou wilt ascend. It is vain for thee to rise before the light; rise after being seated, for thus thou wilt imitate the saints, Job sat on a dunghill, David sat before the Lord, and Ezechiel in the midst of the captives.

Sit thee down then and write quickly: *Remember, Lord, that thou hast formed me as clay, and shalt reduce me into dust.* And then cry out with the Prophet: *I have sinned and done evil in thy sight; enter not into judgment with thy servant, for no one living will be justified in thy sight.*

Remember that publican, who, standing at a distance, durst not raise his eyes to Heaven, but striking his breast, cried out: *Lord, be propitious to me a sinner.* Verily I say unto you, that he descended justified preferable to the proud Pharisee.

Who is like unto thee, O Lord our God, who dwellest on high, and lookest on the humble in Heaven and earth? Thou who raisest the needy from the earth, and liftest up the poor from the dunghill!

Be mindful of us in our humility, preserve thy little ones, and humble sinners to the dust.

Judge, O Lord, the orphan and the humble, that man may not presume to magnify himself on earth.

Passing through thy holy Scriptures, I found everywhere the proud man as one that was wounded and rejected from thy hands.



## CHAPTER IX.

*Of the morals and actions of the truly humble: also of the marks of pride.*

Let us now see who is the humble in word and deed; what are his thoughts, and what is the sign of his sanctity?

*Christ.* He liveth in private, and loveth the lowest place: for it is written, *when thou art invited to the wedding, go and sit in the last place*, not through affectation, but through a firm persuasion that the last place is the only one of which he is worthy; otherwise, he would have neither glory nor reward with his Father who is in Heaven, and who sees all things in private.

If he be ill-treated or despised by others, he beareth it with patience, and is silent through humility.

He meditateth in heart on the injuries and contempt the Saviour of the world had suffered before him.

The Jews said of the Son of God: *He is possessed of the devil; he seduceth the multitude; he is a glutton and a drinker of wine; he is the friend of publicans and sinners.*

The humble consoleth himself with these reflections, and saith. *The servant is not above his Master; if they have called the Father of the family Belzebub, how much more so will they call his servants?*

*Dis.* I shall follow, then, my Lord Jesus Christ, for he has said: *Whoever desireth to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

Be not disturbed, my soul, for thou only sufferest what is due to thy actions, but Jesus Christ has done no evil, nor anything deserving death, and yet he hath humbled himself *even to the death of the cross*.

If they have thus treated the green wood which was in the midst of Paradise, how will they treat the dry wood, which thou art? Therefore I unjustly complain, but justly suffer whatever ill treatment I meet with, and by whomsoever it is given.

*Christ.* If the humble man be insulted or accused, he retorteth not the injury on the aggressor, but acknowledgeth his error and promiseth amendment: and why so? because he studieth not to please man, but to satisfy his God.

He dreadeth not the contempt of man, but feareth the judgment of God, where all things shall be made manifest; whosoever now confesseth his faults with humility, shall then receive the remission of his sins.

The humble man, let him be justly or unjustly reprehended, saith: *I have sinned and done evil before thee; because I know my iniquity, I shall be thoughtful for my sin.* He inwardly feeleth the wound of sin, and therefore patiently beareth whatever chastises him outwardly.

One of the greatest signs of humility is to acknowledge his faults when reprehended.

On the contrary, the proud excuse and defend themselves before others; No (replies their pride), I have not done so; or if I have, I have done well; or if ill, not very ill—not so ill as some say.

Who is he who speak such things of me? and notwithstanding this, he himself sometimes publicly boasts of having perpetrated similar crimes.

How great a misery and blindness it is, that he should declare with his own lips, that he acted wickedly, and yet cannot bear to be reputed a sinner by others. O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity and seek after lies?

If an humble man shall be asked, he is not found ready to answer, but is serious and thoughtful.

He is not easily moved to laughter, for his behaviour is always tempered with gravity.

His heart is touched with spiritual devotion, because it seeks no consolation in temporal joys. He is given to compunction, and his first care is to gain a knowledge of himself.

He studies to weep for his own sins, to dwell on the perfection of others, to bear patiently with their infirmities, and charitably to excuse them.

He cares not for the great and sublime things of the present life, its honours, dignities, high degrees, and exalted stations, but considers them all as vain and perishable; *for when a man shall die, he shall take nothing away, nor shall his glory descend with him to the grave.*

He inquires of himself thus: Where are now those persons who flourished in this world? They have passed through it as the stranger or sojourner of one night.

Wherefore he contemns all worldly honours; he embraces reproaches and humiliations; *he chooses rather to be abject in the house of God, than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.*

He takes up the *easy yoke of Christ*, and casts off the laborious servitude of the devil.

Nothing is more laborious than to wish to ascend,

and this in vain, because the proud man always fears *lest he may be excelled*, and continually falls, even with his own knowledge.

But peace and joy attend the humble man who walks in the plain path of the righteous, and dwells in the valleys. For *the valleys shall abound with corn*, that is, by the consolation of the Holy Ghost they, the righteous, shall *shout and sing hymns* for the gifts which they have received.

The humble man seeks for nothing earthly, for all his hopes are centred in Heaven. He prayeth with the prophet, and saith: *Thou art my hope, O Lord, from my youth, my portion of all that live on earth. For what is there for me in Heaven without my God, and besides thee, what have I desired on earth? The God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.*

He loves obscurity and is ready to be subservient to others for my name's sake; for he calls to his remembrance the Scripture, saying: *The child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not.* Where immediately follows: *And he went down with them and was subject unto them.*

And again: *I am in the midst of you as he who ministereth.* Wherefore he sayeth unto himself: Shall not my soul be subject to God, for from him is my salvation; and again, *O my soul, be thou subject to God, for from him is my patience.*

The love of subjection, of being despised, and considered of no repute, is familiar to the humble, and where can such men be found?

*Dis.* O my God, it is thou who knowest, to thee all the congregation of the holy are known, because

thou art an inhabitant of humble minds. I am not of them; but have mercy on me and spare my sins, that time for repentance may be given me. They at least who are of this number may rejoice in their good works, for they have found great favour with thee.

Behold, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the most holy of all the saints, occurs to my memory, to whom it is said by the angel; *Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with the Lord.* And why do not I find favour in thine eyes, O Lord?

*Christ.* Because thou art not as yet made little in thine own eyes.- It is a deficiency of grace on account of the greatness of thy pride. First cast away this beam from thine eye, and then thou shalt see what I will do for my servant.

When have I denied grace to the humble? And when have I been deaf to the prayer of the poor?

Hear the prophet: *That poor man cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard him, and saved him from all his tribulations.* Because God hath regard to the prayer of the humble, and he hath not despised their petition.

Many with a heart full of pride come to me, and I hear them not. They ask not that they may be freed from their sins, but that they may appear just in the eyes of men.

They wish for devotion, but are unwilling to suffer confusion with me; they covet humility, but they fear to be despised by the world, as the humble are despised.

They seek to love virtue without the hatred of vice, and are deceived in their desires; because he

who would taste the sweetness of virtue, must first root out vice and evil passions from his heart.

But the humble man always endeavours to destroy all pride of heart, and hates pre-eminence over others, which is the greatest iniquity; for this desire of pre-eminence caused angels to become devils, and rendered men sinners, because every man who exalteth himself in his own heart is unclean in the sight of God.

*Wo to you who are wise in your own eyes and prudent in your own conceits.*

Wo to you who believe that every thing which is great is holy; and who say to every thing that is sublime, this is the honour of God, this is his glory.

And why do ye deceive your own hearts? *You take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.* Walk not in great and marvellous things that are above you, but bow down your rebellious necks.

Which of ye shall do: "I will ascend against you, and I will convoke Heaven and earth, and all the elements against you, and the whole world shall fight with me against the stubborn and proud: and your greatness shall be humbled, and the mighty shall be trodden under foot, and the vain-glorious confounded with the earth."

Wo to you who ascend to the sides of the eagle over the high mountain, that ye may behold all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, and who say: Our hope is the tower of Babylon, there will we sit and rejoice.

But that world shall not be, neither shall it stand. Ye shall hear this lamentation instead of singing: O daughter of Babylon miserable; blessed *shall he*



be who shall repay thee thy payment which thou hast paid us.

Lo the hammer and the anvil, the rod and the staff, the roaring and weeping, over all the arrogant. Misfortune and dejection, shame and confusion, over all the presumptuous.

*Wherefore exalt not your horn*, speak not iniquity against the Lord; but humble yourselves even to the lowest in that congregation in which ye stand.

The foundation is humility itself; and no man can lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus.

This foundation is laid in the holy mountain: for the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the tabernacles of Babylon.

The proud man would have meditated of humble things, but the pride of Satan hindered this. For there are very many who are willing to be exalted, but few who are willing to be humbled, because they are eager in pursuit of honours, high degrees, and preferments.

They think highly of themselves, they promise themselves mighty matters, and imagine many other vanities such as these. But these evils must be guarded against, and speedily repelled from the heart of the poor of Christ.

The humble man is also much to be praised in this, that he is found so backward to join in the vain bustle of the world, and solicitous only to preserve the interior tranquillity of his heart; he fears to appear abroad, and delights to be hidden from the world as if he were dead.

He endeavours to follow the humble example of

the saints, to study the cause of his own weakness, and to call to his recollection the humble Jesus conversing among men.

He finds many causes for humbling himself, he seeks a retirement wherein he may devoutly meditate as well by day as by night.

Moreover, he reads the holy Scriptures, and considers how deficient he is in virtue, when compared to the saints. He admires their exercises, labours, temptations, and self-denials; he beholds their extraordinary humility, their heroic patience, perfect obedience, and a mortification so great as to include in it : privation of almost every earthly satisfaction.

Therefore he weeps bitterly, and is exceedingly troubled, because he finds not in himself such fervour in piety, nor so ardent a desire of acquiring virtue.

Ah dust, he says, what are we? Flesh and blood, in which we are wrapped up. The earth is our country, our thoughts are earthly, our conversation is of the things of this life.

Wood and stone occupy our most serious thoughts. Meat and drink, sleep and sloth, limit all our desires. O how low are we fallen, who scarcely retain even a vestige of the virtues of the saints!

Yet, notwithstanding all this, we are still proud, and do not seek the path of humility. We are luke warm in virtue, and daily grow old in iniquity, and yet we desire to be thought much of; yea, and what is more, even to be considered righteous by others.

But this hypocrisy is foreign to the heart of the humble man, who continually burns with the desire of advancing in virtue, *for he considered himself,*

*and went sorrowful in the bitterness of his soul, to his inner chamber to weep there.*

Then rising up, he reads in the apostle St. Paul, what he may think of himself: *I (says he) am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

And in the Gospel, concerning the blessed Virgin: *The Lord hath regarded the humility of his hand-maid.* And again in the prophet: *I have humbled my soul with fasting, I was clothed with haircloth.* And with Abraham: *I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.*

True humility, which is the origin and safeguard of all virtues, works all these things in the hearts of the elect.

Arise now, and meet her, say unto her: Welcome, humility, my mistress. Enter into me, O thou virtue of Christ, thou bestower of grace, thou singular glory of the Virgin Mary. Come unto me, O thou restorer of injured charity, thou reconciliation of all human transgressions.

Through thee the Heavens are opened, and through thee the barriers of Hell are broken. Through thee we are exalted, and through thee we are restored to our true and Heavenly country.

Thou makest just men of sinners, and dost associate the just with the angels. Thou hast called Christ from Heaven, and hast exalted Mary above all the choirs of angels.

For though the rich man be in repute, nevertheless God conferreth his grace on none but the humble. And because this virtue abounded more than all

others in Mary, she for this reason merited the appellation of *full of grace*.

Now it is evident, that humility is, and always was, the greatest virtue of the saints. Her reward is greater than that due to good work; she comprehends that which is not taught by learning.

She knows not unhappiness, because she never presumes great things of herself.

He who possesses her, who loves and cherishes her, will sleep in the peace of Christ, and will have rest as Christ hath promised to the humble: *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*

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OF THE THIRD TABERNACLE,  
THAT IS,  
OF PATIENCE.

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CHAPTER X.

*Of the necessity of patience, amidst so many miseries of this life.*

Since, O Lord, thou hast vouchsafed to speak something of poverty and humility, it now remains that according to thy promise, thou wouldst instil into the heart of thy servant some precepts concerning patience, that admirable virtue. For this, I confess before thee, I much want, and that I have great need of much patience.

For what is my life but a long and certain misery, from the hour of my birth even to my grave? and

no time intervenes which does not multiply grief and labour for me.

And how I came unto this misery, O my God, thou well knowest; how many evils have encompassed me, pent up in the prison of this body, and there is none who knoweth the misery of man as thou dost, O Lord my God. See then how necessary patience is for me.

Whence comes it, O my soul, that thou art in the land of thine enemies? For if thou hadst walked in the way of the Lord, thou wouldst have dwelt in peace upon earth. Thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, the fountain of living waters, and thou hast digged for thyself cisterns which could not contain water; and, therefore, thou art delivered into the hands of those who hate thee.

*But return to me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee.* On account of the enormity of my sins, O Lord, all these evils have come upon me by thy just judgment. I have sinned with my fathers, and I carry a heavy yoke in common with all the sons of Adam, because all his children are born the children of wrath.

And had not thy help come to us from Heaven, we had been like to Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed in their iniquities.

Therefore, thy mercies are many, O Lord, that we are not consumed; and thy goodness exceedingly great, that we as yet live. We all were the children of death, but thou in thy pity hast saved us, thy judgment was not as our transgression deserved, and thy mercy hath far surpassed all our iniquities.

*Thou hast remembered that we are but dust, and*

*that man is as grass and the flower of the field.* God, the father of mercies, hath spoken these things to my soul, that I might know my own miseries, and the cause of them, and his merciful judgments.

In whom then shall I seek comfort, unless in thee, O Lord Jesus Christ?

And if I deserve not the fulness of consolation, grant it to me at least in some measure, for *I have found many destroyers telling me unjust fables, but not as thy law, O Lord.*

O thou best comforter, thou sweet guest of the soul, thou delightful refresher, who fillest every creature with thy blessings; open thy hand, and pour down thy benediction upon this parched earth of mine.

*I stretched forth my hands unto thee, because I am as earth without water unto thee. Hear me speedily, O Lord, for my spirit hath fainted away.*

And without thee whither shall I go? And to whom shall I fly? Thou, O Lord, art my God; and, therefore, I beseech thee propitiously to hear my prayers.

I have lifted up my soul unto thee, do thou not despise me. I have showed unto thee my misery, turn not away thine eyes from me. I have sinned, condemn me not. My heart hath spoken unto thee, my face hath sought thee, O Lord, forsake me not.

For thou thyself hast said with a desire to console us: *Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.* And again: *If any one thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*

My soul hath thirsted after thee, for thee my flesh O how many ways. In a desert land where



*there is no way and no water, is my habitation, O Lord. Thou hast given me a parched land, give me also land that is watered from on high.*

For the miseries with which I am afflicted in this life are many; for whithersoever I turn me, sorrows and labours await me.

And therefore I beseech thee, be not angry with me, because my spirit is troubled within me, and my words are not only full of murmurs but of grief. I have poured forth my prayer in thy sight, and have made my tribulation known unto thee.

For it is often a consolation to the miserable, to reveal his sorrows to his friend. And the angry wound when it is opened, is less painful and is sooner healed. To thee, therefore, I have made known my case, O Father of mercies.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*The consolation of a man afflicted and groaning in tribulation.*

*Christ.* What wouldst thou, that I should do for thee? Be more tranquil, O my Son. *Seeing I beheld the affliction of my people, who are in Egypt, and am come down to deliver them.*

And when I also grant favours unto thee, thou shalt be mindful of my name, because I am thy Saviour and Redeemer. Now, be not sad, for behold, I myself, who have spoken, am here.

Why therefore art thou consumed with grief? Hast thou not a comforter? Remember the promise which I made to my disciples: *I will not leave you*

*orphans; but I will send the promise of my Father to you, the Spirit of Truth, to remain with you for ever. For he it is who in adversity consoles the hearts of the righteous.*

*Dis.* This, O Lord, thou hast said to thy apostles and disciples, and thou hast fulfilled thy promise unto them; but I know not how that promise can avail me, seeing I was not present.

*Christ.* Dost thou not also desire to become my disciple?

*Dis.* Yes, Lord.

*Christ.* What I have said unto them, I say unto all, because I include the little and the great. I have asked my Father not only for these, but also for all those who shall truly believe in me.

For every man who desireth to be a disciple of Christ, shall be a partaker of all the good things which I have promised to my elect. I have chosen them, and have appointed them to go and bring forth fruit with patience, and that their fruit should remain for ever.

This I speak unto thee, that thou mayest have peace in me, and thou mayest guard thy soul in patience.

My peace I leave unto thee, my peace I give unto thee, not as the world gives it do I give it to thee. Be patient, and cheerfully embrace adversity.

Despond not in tribulations, because tribulation is a consuming fire, it purges away sins, extinguishes presumption, chases away dissoluteness, causes a salutary sorrow, gives a disgust of worldly things, and makes a man an imitator of Christ.

Wouldst thou gladly relinquish such advantages as these?

*Dis.* No, Lord.

*Christ.* As true wisdom operates these things by means of tribulation.

Do not thou therefore seek for peace except in God; the peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, which the world cannot bestow.

*Dis.* O peace and joy of my Lord Jesus Christ, after what manner hast thou coming from Heaven poured thyself into the hearts of the elect.

O peace and joy of the Holy Ghost, which is not given to the wicked, but is manifested to the humble, and to all the devout servants of God! I wish thou wouldst burst the Heavens and descend unto me, and that thou wouldst more frequently visit my infirm soul; that I might learn by experience, *that the spirit of wisdom is kind, and that there is great peace for such as love thy law*, and taste the sweetness of the Holy Spirit.

How willingly would I then despise all perishable and earthly things, that I might always adhere to his sweetness? How patiently would I undergo all adversity, when for love of him I could feel no affliction burdensome? And what then could any longer delight me, when he had wholly absorbed me to himself?

O Lord, how sweet is thy spirit, who, that thou mightest demonstrate thy sweetness to the children of grace, hast filled hungry souls with most sweet bread sent from Heaven, replenished with inward delight, sending the scornful rich away empty, because they are not worthy of the consolation of the Holy Ghost.

Thy spirit, one and the same, performs all these

things, dealing to each just as it willeth, helping our infirmity on our journey in this miserable exile, in which we are banished.

But I know, O Lord, that this is the third hour of the day, when *Peter opened his mouth, and spoke thy word with great confidence, when he was filled with new wine, which gladdeneth the heart, when he was anointed with the oil of grace and gladness, with his companions.*

This is the hour, of which his co-apostle says: *The love of God is diffused through our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us! Because we have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God. And he wrote saying: Rejoice (brethren) always in the Lord; again I say unto you, rejoice, for the Lord is near at hand.*

Truly, he was near to him, who received such an abundance of grace from the Lord, that he himself was full of it, and administered to others so many consolations from the fulness of his heart. *For whether (says he) we are transported in mind, it is to God, or whether we are more moderate, it is for you.*

This is the hour in which the prophet rejoiceth, saying: *And he hath put into my mouth a new canticle, a song to my Lord. My lips shall rejoice when I sing unto thee, and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. And there were many who prophesied divers things, and who have tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.*

O my God, thou hast bestowed this blessing upon them. O God, thou hast been propitious unto thy servants, and has taught them inwardly by thy spirit.

Blessed are they who have deserved to be partakers of celestial happiness, and who have delighted to serve both by day and by night a master so sweet and so holy.

Their life and conversation were not of this world, but their hearts were occupied with the thoughts of eternity. They are now filled with the sweet treasures of the Lord, and would to God they would let fall some fragment to their little ones, that the poor might eat and be filled with the crumbs which fall from the table of their masters.

But where is that hour of which it is again written: *This is your hour, and the power of darkness?*

O Lord Jesus Christ (if I rightly remember), these are your words. And it delighteth me to recall to my memory many others, because I know, that all these things were done and written on my account.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Patience is recommended by the words and example of Christ and the patriarchs.*

Where is, O good Jesus, the word of our salvation, which thou hast spoken in the bitterness of thy soul: *My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.* And immediately after to thy disciples: *The hour is come, when the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of sinners, and shall be crucified and put to death.*

And elsewhere: "O Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause I came unto this hour," that is to say, O good Jesus, that thou shalt die for

the people, and the whole nation shall not perish. Because, unless a grain of wheat (which is Christ Jesus our Lord) falling into the earth dieth not, it remaineth alone ; but if it dieth, it bringeth forth much fruit.

O happy and blessed hour, in which man has been redeemed from eternal death. O joyful, welcome, and superabundant sorrow, which hath wiped away the perpetual sorrow of our perdition, and restored to man the lost joys of Paradise.

This was the fruit, O Jesus, of thy sacred passion, and of thy excessive sorrow assumed for us, that thou mightest restore lost man to everlasting life.

Wherefore that hour was not full of joy, but grief ; not of consolation, but suffering ; not of peace, but affliction, when, O Jesus, thou saidst to the crowd : " Dost thou come as to a robber, with swords and clubs, to apprehend me ? "

This, truly, was an hour of tumult and darkness, because the Jews vehemently exclaimed : " Crucify him, he is guilty of death. " Nevertheless, Jesus was silent ; and when he was accused by the chief priests, he made no answer.

Why now, O wretched sinner, dost thou complain ? Say, where is thy patience ? Thou art guilty, and Jesus is punished for thee ; thou hast sinned, and he is scourged ; thou hast committed this enormous crime, which could not be wiped away, unless by the death of him who was innocent.

Then what return shalt thou make unto him for all which he hath done for thee ? And what exchange shalt thou give for thy soul ? He laid down his life for thee ; what recompense wilt thou make him ? Say : " I will take the chalice of salvation,



and will call upon the name of the Lord." Justly, indeed, and if you desire to be grateful, endeavour to drink it also.

*Christ.* Canst thou not taste of the cup which I have drank?

*Dis.* Lord, I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.

*Christ.* I say unto you: "Drink ye all of it;" drink of my wine which I have mixed for you. And again I say unto you: "Unless ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you. And say not in your hearts: This saying is hard, and who can bear it?"

Look back to me, and see how I alone bore the burden and heat of the day; and see if there be any who has borne so heavy a burden; but why compare with me?

I, in my innocence, have passed through the eye of the needle; I have been stuck in the mire of the deep, and in me there has been no fault; I alone have trodden the wine-press, and of all the nations there was not a man with me. The wicked have wrought upon my back, they have prolonged their iniquity. Behold my hands and my feet, how I am crucified for you.

Put forth your hands, and discover the place of the nails. Feel my wounds, and see how blood and water flow from my side. Bring the vessels of your heart, and receive the balsamic liquor, the oil of mercy and grace, and carefully preserve it therein.

Suck honey from the rock, and oil from the hardest stone. I have opened the door of my heart, enter into it. I caused my side to be pierced with a lance, hide ye in it.

What should I do that I have not done? Answer

me. Abide ye in me, and I will abide in you; willingly suffer something for me, I have borne so many things for you. I have made the burden light and portable by my example; fear not the cross which is presented to you.

All ye who are in affliction, ye who are inwardly troubled, ye who have no consolation, come unto me; for I am your comforter.

Why do you fear the evils of the day? I am your protector, your helper in distress and tribulation. Tell me when I have not assisted those who have put their trust in me? When have I been deaf to those who cried unto me?

What is written in the psalm, and how have ye read? "The Lord is nigh to those who are contrite of heart, and he will save the humble in spirit. The just have cried out, and the Lord heard them, and delivered them from all their tribulations."

Behold in what words I exhort you, that ye may not faint under afflictions. Ye ought rather to rejoice that ye have been in tribulation in this world, and to esteem it a sign of divine love; for verily it is the true sign of my elect.

Open the sealed book, written within and without (I mean the Old and New Testaments); read ye and understand, that there has been none of the saints who has not been tried by temptations and various sufferings, who has not suffered injury, and who has not in all these trials been made more acceptable to God, and their affections more pure before men.

My saints profit in adversity and tribulations, and show the odour of their innocence by their patience.

Abel, who was persecuted by the malicious Cain,

was, notwithstanding, a just man. And a bright example of chastity is shown in the virtuous youth Joseph, struggling against the allurements of vice.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

*Patience is particularly to be exercised in the mortification of self-will.*

*Christ.* A man is also proved to be a true servant of God, who endeavours to resist his own inclinations; and he, with the faithful Abraham, shall be praised for the virtue of obedience, and shall be filled with Heavenly benedictions; because he is more obedient to the voice of God than to the importunities of his own corrupt flesh, which is always agitated by its evil propensities.

Of self-will, what shall I say? It is what my soul abhorreth. Nothing is pleasing to me which is vitiated by self-will. It as completely destroys the merit of good works as true obedience renders them pure and incorruptible.

If a man doth a good action from a motive of self-will, instead of pleasing God, he incurs his displeasure thereby. Do good from a motive of obedience, and your merit shall be greatly increased, because God regardeth the purity of your intention. Obedience makes a man little in his own eyes, and conducts him to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the example of true obedience.

How few are there found, who are distinguished for the bright virtue of obedience? Every one cheerfully doth that which seemeth good to himself, wherefore he often errs.

Know ye children of obedience, that it is never permitted you to do evil; but that sometimes even to omit a meritorious action from a motive of obedience leads you to perfection.

As perfect charity seeketh not itself, so true obedience always endeavours to do what is fit, without any view to self-gratification.

Ye obey me when ye are subject to those who are set over you. Ye live for me whilst ye are sacrificing your own inclinations. I have given life to you, I have been slain for you, and ye shall live with me if ye die to yourselves and to the world.

Mortify, my children, mortify self-will, beware of it, and of every vile and carnal desire.

Destroy those enemies, otherwise they will destroy you. They will be as a stake in your eyes, as a spear in your sides, as a serpent in the way, and as a bear in the path, if ye kill them not.

They will not suffer you to sleep in the bed of a peaceful conscience, they will take away peace from your hearts; because these are the enemies which disturb Israel (that is, a faithful soul desiring to see God). I have admonished you. Watch ye therefore that ye walk cautiously, because they are days of evil, and refrain from every species of sin.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

*Of the examples of the Prophets and Martyrs, by which Patience is taught.*

*Christ.* I have proposed unto you the patriarchs, and if that be not sufficient, I will adduce the pro-

phets, because they have experienced many tribulations in this wicked world.

The first prophet sayeth: "I met with trouble and sorrow, and I invoked the name of the Lord. Tribulation and anguish have found me. Thy commandments are my meditation. The tribulations of the just are many, but out of them all the Lord will deliver them.

Consider the force of the words how the prophet always found toil and grief in himself; but he took the true means of being freed from them, when he cried out to God in every pressure of his heart. He again has said: When I was in tribulation, *I cried out to the Lord, and he heard me.*

The second prophet sayeth: "Weeping, I wept, and my eye shedding tears because the comforter was far from me, turning towards my soul. I am made a derision to all my people, their song the whole day long. He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath inebriated me with wormwood. He hath broken my teeth one by one, he hath fed me with ashes; and my soul is removed far off from peace. I have forgotten good things; and I said my end and my hope is perished from the Lord."

Attend to these words, because they are the words of lamentation, and written by the prophet Jeremiah. But he also found his own consolation when he a second time writes: "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore I will expect him." "The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the soul that seeketh him, because the Lord repelleth not for ever."

The third prophet sayeth: "Wo is me, because I am become like unto him who gathereth in autumn the grapes of the vintage. There is not a cluster to

eat: my soul hath desired the first ripe figs. The holy man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men."

However he consoles himself, saying: "But I will look towards the Lord, I will wait for God my Saviour: my God will hear me. When I sit in darkness the Lord is my light. I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. He will bring me forth into the light, I shall behold his justice."

Behold the testimonies of the prophets, how contrite their hearts have been, and in what manner their souls have been consoled in God.

Ye have known also the patience of my servant Job. Truly a great example of that excellent virtue, given to all my servants as a solace in their afflictions, and ye are not ignorant of the many sufferings, persecutions, and temptations of divers of my saints. For all of them, particularly the holy martyrs, have been approved by heavy afflictions, and through patience are made victorious over their persecutors. If ye rightly consider, no man will be worthy of the crown who is not found to fight valiantly. For the good soldier is proved in battle. Decline the contests of temptation and the conflicts of tribulation, and there will be no victory. And if there be no victory, the crown of merit is justly due to none.

Wherefore St. James the apostle says: "My brethren, count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations." And St. Peter: "But if also you suffer any thing for justice sake, blessed are ye." And St. Paul: "Because it has given you in Christ, that ye not only believe in him, but suffer for him also."

Do thou also be admonished by the examples and



doctrines of these my servants ; at all times keep patience in thy heart ; and in all thy tribulation and anguish resign thyself unto me. Who can hurt thee, if thou be a zealous imitator of virtue ? For, behold, all thy groans are numbered ; and thou sufferest nothing so trivial, for which thou shalt not be crowned.

When encompassed on every side with tribulation, remember that this is the way of the saints, through which they have passed to the kingdom of Heaven.

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## CHAPTER XV

*Patience is recommended by the consideration of its utility, the labour being momentary, the reward eternal.*

*Christ.* Console thyself also, because in this thou art made like unto Christ Jesus thy Lord, and give thanks, if thou shalt be able to make some small retribution unto him. For I say unto thee, that it is a greater merit to suffer affliction patiently, than to do good works.

How many are supposed to be my servants, but they can suffer little. They are dismayed by a little tribulation, they are irritated at the smallest reproach, they are scandalized on the most trifling occasion, they quickly complain when an injury is done to them, and they think of many arguments when they are accused. But such conduct is not pleasing in my sight, but very unlike to my example and to that of all the saints.

Some also say, that they have but little peace ; and I say that the reason why they have not peace, is because they have not patience, and because they are carnal, and walk according to man. " From

whence are wars and contentions among ye? Come they not hence from your concupiscences?"

Ye will not find peace in the present life, unless in your patience. The more patient any one shall be, the greater share of peace shall he enjoy. "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth." My peace in much patience; in enduring evils, in contempt of worldly joys. He who desires to be a friend of God, ought to act thus.

"I came not to send peace upon the earth, but the sword. Peace on earth shall be to men of good will; because there is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord."

Have peace in God, and not with the world; peace not with your vices and concupiscences, but peace by fighting valiantly against your passions. This is the good and holy peace, and acceptable to me.

Remember also in thy tribulation, that all thy labour and pain will be finished in a short time, but thy reward shall be eternal and copious with me in heaven.

Again, reflect concerning the damnation of many, how great shall be their torments. And if thou canst not bear even a little, and for a short time, what will become of thee in the inextinguishable fire of Hell? Put thy finger into a flame of fire, and perhaps thou art scarcely able to bear it. What then shall become of thee if thy whole body be cast into the flames of Hell? Wherefore fear not him who killeth the body, be not angry with him who scourgeth the miserable flesh; but fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to destroy both body and soul in Hell. I say fear this, ponder this, frequently think of this; and thou wilt see that all thy tribulation is nothing.

Thou shalt therefore in every worldly calamity be

consoled by these words: "Be thou patient even to the coming of the Lord, because the end of all will presently draw near. The world and all its concupiscences pass away." He therefore who loveth nothing in the world, more easily beareth adversity.

All the lovers of the world deceive themselves, confiding in an empty shadow. But holy men pant after eternal rewards, and eagerly wish to depart speedily from the world. They desire to have nothing in it, but they lay up a treasure for themselves in heaven. They bear many adversities, but they defend themselves with the armour of patience. They would often wish to be freed from adversities and tribulations, but yet in all these trials they commit themselves into my hands, saying: "O Father, thy will be done. O Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt." "All things which the Lord would, that hath he done in Heaven and on Earth, in the sea and in every abyss:" and therefore adversity happens to none without my permission and just ordinance.

*Dis.* O Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest what is expedient for me. Behold, I am thy servant, be it unto me according to thy word.

All thy judgments are true and right; this man thou dost humble, this exalt, because in thy hand are all the boundaries of the earth. "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is righteous: thou art faithful and holy in all thy works: in thy will are all things placed, and there is none who can resist thee." For thou hast made Heaven and Earth, the sea, and all things which are contained in the compass of the Heavens. Thou art Lord of all things, wherefore into thy hands I commend my spirit, because thou art my

Redeemer. Thou art my deliverer from my spiteful enemies—my passions and vices, my helper in tribulations, and my comforter in many afflictions which have encompassed me. Grant me patience, O Lord, for patience is necessary for me; patience is my safeguard.

I said unto patience: Thou art my sister; unto poverty: Thou art my friend; unto humility: Thou art my mistress and my mother. Ye are all beloved of the Lord, and blessed by the words of his mouth. Would to God ye were as agreeable and delightful unto me, and to all his servants, as ye are acceptable unto him.

I beseech you once and again to remain with us, even to the end of our lives; because we shall securely pass to the Lord, if we remain with you.

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THE GROANS AND SIGHS OF A PENITENT SOUL ;  
OR, TRUE COMPUNCTION OF HEART.

Weep with me, all ye my friends, and behold my grief because it is great. Attend to my inward wound because it is very deep.

For what do I weep? For this I say it is, because I am cast away from the face of the God of Heaven, from the light of his countenance. My abode is in darkness and in the shadow of death, and I behold not the light of Heaven.

Wherefore what joy can there be for me? I, a miserable creature, have descended from Jerusalem into Jericho, and have met with most cruel robbers, who having stripped me of the robe of immortality, and inflicted many wounds on me, departed, leaving me half dead.

“The guards of the city found me, they smote and wounded me: the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.”

Now therefore, ye daughters of Jerusalem, tell your beloved, that I am filled with grief. Send unto him saying: “O Lord, behold, Lazarus, whom thou lovest, is sick:” and again, “Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of a palsy, and is grievously tormented.”

I have laboured under an infirmity for many years; I, thy servant, am lame from the womb of my mother: because I am bound down by the heavy chain of original sin.

I am the son of Adam the prevaricator, and the child of death, conceived and born in sin. My entrance into life miserable, and my departure out of life full of terror. And whither shall I fly? Alas, I know not.

If I ascend indeed into Heaven, thou art there, who sparest not sinners. And if I descend into Hell, thou art there also to punish prevaricators.

Where shall I hide myself from the countenance of thy wrath, because I have sinned exceedingly in the course of my life? I looked up towards Heaven, and the Lord said: “Take away the wicked, that he may not see the glory of God.”

I looked back again into the abyss, and this terrible voice sounded in my ears: “Bind him hands and feet, and cast him into exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

From this time being mightily troubled, I began to fear, and to be very sad; and all my bones were changed by reason of the wrath and indignation of

the Lord. "Fear and trembling came upon me, and darkness covered me."

And I said: "Who then can be saved? If this terrible and holy name shall observe iniquities, who shall sustain it?"

But now be thou silent, O my soul; for I have heard a consoling voice, speaking unto them who are in grief and sadness. Write: "Blessed are they who mourn, because they shall be comforted." And again: "Do penance, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

It is the voice of the Lord consoling his servants; the voice of the Lord saying: "Ye sons of men, be converted and live."

"Be converted unto me, and I will be turned unto you. Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

And the prophet, speaking to such as are in grief, says these words: "The Lord is nigh unto those who are troubled in heart." And of himself he speaks a word full of consolation: "The Lord heard and hath taken pity on me, the Lord is become my helper, because he hath not despised the petition of the poor."

Behold, as yet there is room for mercy, and the gate is not yet shut. Wherefore, by penance ye will be able to repair all, both the evil which ye have done and the good which ye have omitted.

Now fear not: "For the Son of man is come to seek and save what had been lost." And again: "I came not to call the just, but sinners."

Therefore, raise thyself up, O my soul, into a good confidence, because the Lord hath spoken. Thy



life approached unto Hell, and thou wast delivered up unto death : but the Lord hath taken compassion on thee, and hath been merciful unto thee.

Thou hast feared exceedingly the anger of God, and thou hast thought to hide thyself from him, as thy father Adam did when he had sinned ; but this thought was vain. Thou didst also meditate flight into some distant region, as Jonas did when he fled from the face of the Lord into the ship ; but in this thou didst also labour to no purpose, for thou shalt not be able to escape the hand of God, either by concealment or by flight.

Return then through another way to the heavenly region, which God showeth unto thee, that thou mayest walk therein. This is the way : *do penance*. The best counsel and the most powerful help is given thee from Heaven. The counsel is this, that thou wouldst truly repent, and by weeping, make atonement for thy sins ; and that thus, being reconciled, thou mayest have peace with God.

“Thy help is from the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth ;” who, though he had no need of thee, vouchsafed to pay every debt for thee ; for he delivered himself up unto death, and obtained for sinners, that they should not perish ; and thus by his death hath snatched thee from eternal death, and succoured thee by his cross and passion.

St. Paul, speaking to the faithful, says : “He hath borne our sins, nailing them to the cross, forgiving us all our transgressions, that we may live with him.”

Hence, in another place the same apostle speaks : “A faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation,

that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners." Behold what consolation, and how great a hope God has left to sinners; but that is only to such as are penitent, and forsake sin. Remember, O my soul, the words of this saint, in which he hath given such hope to thee.

And now, O Lord, I prostrate myself in prayer before thee, and I cry out to thee with my whole heart: O Lord God, holy Father, "I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son. But, O my Father, make me as one of thy hired servants."

If thou hadst cast me away from thy face, thou wouldst have acted *justly*, but thou dost act *mercifully* in receiving me, who am unworthy of the least of thy blessings.

Relying on this thy mercy, I fall down at thy feet, I pour forth tears, I adore and devoutly kiss thy sacred footsteps, beseeching thee with an humble and contrite heart, to pardon all my sins.

O merciful God, look down upon me, a poor and insignificant worm; and be propitious to me, as thou hast been to the blessed Mary Magdalen, formerly a great sinner, and who suddenly obtained pardon when she cast herself at thy sacred feet.

Extend thy mercy to them that know thee; stretch forth thy right hand to thy banished servant; and let thy divine eyes behold the contrition of my heart. Let not my lord be angry for ever, on account of the wickedness of his sinful servant; but let him remember the multitude of his mercies from the beginning, and let him be this day reconciled to me, a wretched and miserable sinner.

O Lord hearken to this one petition, which thy servant pours out before thee, bending his knees before thy omnipotence, adoring upon earth the countenance of thy glory; because I have acted foolishly and very unwisely, frequently offending thy clemency, not fearing thy judgments. O Lord.

Acquit, I beseech thee, thy servant of every sin, and blot not out my name from the book of life; but graciously vouchsafe to write it down in the number of thy elect, that it may be there found for the praise and glory of thy most holy name. Amen.

O how great is thy mercy, O Lord, who, that thou mightest the more abundantly show thy goodness, hast been pleased to free from death, fallen man, who was deserving of death, and moreover to invite with thy most benign voice the fugitives and the banished, sending thy faithful servants and friends at the hour of supper to tell those who were invited, "that all things are ready, come ye to the wedding."

Thou mightest, according to the rule of justice, have sent the ministers of thy vengeance after thine enemies, who were unwilling that thou shouldst reign over them, to destroy these homicides, because they deserved either to "be cast into prison, until they should pay the last farthing," or to be cut off with those who are in Hell.

But thou hast not exercised this thy almighty *power*, but hast showed thy *mercy*, in patiently bearing all for a time, that thy beloved might be freed, *and flee from before the bow*; that is, that they would prevent a horrible judgment by a sincere conversion.

For if thou, O Lord, hadst not been pleased to extend thy hand to the wicked, and to all that have sinned,

many would have been lost, who are now become thy friends, and are in the greatest favour with thee.

Thou wouldst not now have Peter, who sinned by thrice denying thee : nor Paul who persecuted thee ; nor Matthew, the publican, who panted after worldly gain ; nor indeed many of thy great apostles, whom thou hast appointed judges over all the earth. But now, indeed, they are become very dear to thee, and thou hast made them acquainted with all things, which thou hast heard from the Father ; and thou art glorified in them, and they have proclaimed thy name upon earth.

These marvellous things have been wrought by thy omnipotent hand, by thy mercy, and by thy right hand replete with all sweetness ; for suppressing all thy anger against us, it has pleased thee to make us children of grace, partakers of thy divine nature, and co-heirs of thy heavenly kingdom.

O fountain of pity and infinite mercy, which dost never cease to overflow, but dost always remain easy of access to those approaching to thee, grant that all may have recourse to thee, and may taste of the delights of thy table, because they are sweet, and because in them is neither bitterness nor death.

But alas ! many turn themselves backward, loving this world more than the heavenly society of thy children, the saints ; giving themselves up to despair, and obeying uncleanness and iniquity, and who, being far from thee in their hearts, place all their happiness in the deceitful pleasures of this world. But thy beloved children and faithful servants, hating evil, love thee with their whole hearts, and meditate on thy commandments both by day and by night,

and thou dost shelter them under thy wings, lest they should be ensnared by the allurements of the world.

These, thy servants, always glowing with a longing desire of eternal life, wish to be speedily dissolved, that they may live much more happily with thee. And when they are not heard according to their desire, it happens for the better, in order to promote their own salvation, and to fulfil thy will, that they are still exercised in divers trials.

Not that thou, O Lord, dost then love them the less, because thou dost not presently grant their petitions and fulfil their desires ; but because it is thy divine will, by deferring it, to reward more abundantly hereafter those whom thou dost permit to be longer afflicted in this life.

It is well for these, who have obtained such grace from thee, and who now glow with a desire of eternal life, and by the fruit of good works, are waiting for a copious retribution. But how can I who am a sinner, and who am borne down by the weight of my crimes, presume to lift up my eyes to these unparalleled mountains of piety, namely, thy saints and perfect men, who in this earthly habitation, which is likened unto a valley of tears, have so raised themselves up as to touch the very heavens, by the sublimity of their conversation, and intenseness of their contemplation ?

“Wo, wo, wo,” says St. John the Apostle, “to the inhabitants of the earth.” Wo to those of carnal mind, and to those inhabiting this world with a craving desire. Wo also unto these, who are surrounded with the stings of many passions, and who resist them not. And wo to those who wander far

from the way of the just, who do not weep, but vainly laugh, and, what is worse, do evil when in the presence of God: even this they fear not to do, but in a little time they esteem it of no consequence.

What wonder then, if I now grieve, and if, as is meet, I sincerely lament? For internal grief changes the affection of man, and wishes not to rejoice, nor indeed to be consoled in earthly things. Behold the cause why we all should grieve and weep? Because the soul seldom perfectly recollects itself, and rarely enjoys even a small portion of its celestial food. Wherefore, being weighed down with a desire of earthly things, it ought justly to lament. Let him then, who has a heart within him, deplore and say: "I did eat ashes as bread, and have mingled my drink with tears."

This is the reason, I say, for which I weep, because my grief is not on account of heavenly but of earthly things, and because I am engrossed with visible and unnecessary things, and often I am delighted with them, and what is worse, I am sometimes with difficulty withdrawn from them. Alas, I say, I am with difficulty withdrawn from these things, which are hurtful to me, and which I often detest and hate, and nevertheless I am again led captive by them.

O clay and mire, how long wilt thou cling to me? O darkness and miserable state of infatuation, how long shall I be involved in you? How long shall I endure you, and how long shall I dwell in you? My infirmity is so great, that I find it difficult to withstand temptations, but easy enough to yield to vice and the evil propensities of the heart. For I am but earth, formed of earth; and therefore, by



natural frailty, I find myself to be moved rather by earthly than by heavenly thoughts.

I seek after eternal food with less avidity than after that which is temporal; and my strength is dried up as a potsherd, "because I forgot to eat my bread;" my bread, I say my bread, which God the Father had given me, but it is now changed into earthly bread. And lo! I, who could have been filled with heavenly food, do now eat ashes and husks like swine.

I am miserable and very unhappy, who am come to such extreme hunger, that not knowing and neglecting things above, I should turn my thoughts to the love of things below. I was created to taste of perpetual delights, sweeter than honey and the honey-comb; but, sinning against my God, I have been struck blind, and have lost that celestial food, and am now fed with passions and vain affections of this world. And the longer my heart perceives itself excluded from interior comforts, the more licentiously it pursues every earthly consolation.

Nevertheless, sometimes on serious reflection. I find myself unhappy amidst all these earthly enjoyments. For I am encompassed and overwhelmed with many adversities, and with many griefs, and bowed down with much anguish; I am often sad, and what to choose I know not. I am straitened on all sides and indeed I scarcely discern through my own blindness which to prefer; I ask for the things that are above me, things which are not present, but to come; and in the meantime I am eager in pursuit of the things which are of this world.

How craftily do earthly desires insinuate them-

selves into the heart of man ! They come in troops to me, and with them divers thoughts ; some of the world, some of the flesh, more of the Devil ; and surrounding me on every side, they say : “ We are thy bone and thy flesh. Let us remain a little while with thee. Consent unto us, be a friend unto us, and even tarry here a little while with us.” Sometimes they craftily lay snares for me with their blandishments and great promises : and at other times they endeavour to weigh down my soul with threats, with terrors, and the various events of evil. And I, who am a frail man, and weak to resist their persuasions and importunities, do not withstand them as I ought. Notwithstanding, I am certain of being deceived, if I do as they persuade me, since they speak to me guilefully, and since that persuasion is not of God, but of malignity.

They, indeed, who are born of God resist the Devil, and fly from his suggestions ; and they who hate the world and the things which are in it, have nothing to rivet their affections here below. They also, who are wise in God, believe not every spirit, but prove all, whether the spirit be of God or of the world. They hear indeed, but they do not consent, saying : “ We know not whence ye are. Begone, because ye are of your father the Devil, and truth is not in you.”

Such is the conflict of the pious ; and the Lord who beholdeth the universe, knoweth how great the labour is of all their temptations.

That life is full of grief and trouble, they well know who have drunk of the cup of its bitterness.

Wherefore the mind of man seeks how it may be

refreshed, and finds all consolation is in vain, unless the divine consolation is present.

It is taught by daily experience, that all earthly hopes are deceitful, and that whatever he seeks out of God in the time of this pilgrimage, does only increase his bitterness.

*Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged,* and truly there is nothing in this life in which I can safely rest. My members severally speak to me, saying: "Harass not thyself for nothing, for sooner shalt thou consume away, than be satisfied with these earthly things." Then, says my spirit who always desires sweet, delicious, and most excellent food: "I will return to my house, whence I departed, for I fared better there than I do now; and I even loathe those things which have been offered to me abroad."

But, O my flesh, I wish you would hear this voice; and setting your own prudence apart, emulate the spirit. Doubtless you would find life, and escape eternal death. You ought to pay your temporal dues; for to refuse obedience to the spirit, brings condemnation. Therefore will you wisely act if you oppose not, but with all mildness subject yourself to the spirit, that you may not feel the second death, but enter into eternal rest, which above all things you love.

Therefore, follow me, and distress not your spirit by indulging desires against it; but rather prepare yourself better to conform to all its dictates; for I tell you, if you have shared its tribulation, you will hereafter share its consolation.

Daughter of Sion, put on sackcloth and ashes, come down and sit in the dust. Lament with me,

for it is not well with me ; and my pain is neither moderate nor of short duration.

My Lord and my God is angry with his servant, and has cursed his works, saying : “ In the sweat of your face shall you eat your bread.” And I confess that I have justly lost that desirable land, because I have not kept God’s commandment.

Before my fall, my food was not animal, earthly, and bodily ; but heavenly, angelic, and spiritual.

The bread which God provided for me was wheat en, fine and sifted, but is now become of barley, coarse and mouldy ; if I add, baked under the ashes and never turned, I speak truth. With reason then do I deplore the misery which I have endured in the exile in which I am born, and the loss which I sustain in a strange land.

All ye sons of men lament. Sons of Adam, weep for your own sakes, who eat ashes for bread, and have changed the heavenly for earthly food : O blind and unhappy children, what have ye forfeited ? Because ye do not know the value of what you have lost, ye do not weep, and therefore are ye the more wretched, for ye see not into what utter misery ye have fallen. Behold my fall—of what delights I am deprived, and with what evils I am surrounded. I am distressed in this life, and day and night do I sigh for the eternal banquet, where no one hungers, but all delight to drink the wine—that wine which affects not the understanding, but gladdens and purifies the hearts of the saints ; there is no one to give *me* a draught of it. Scarce a drop of the water of salvation, which abounds in the heavenly realms, is given to those who call for it Heaven is

shut against me, the earth yields not its fruit; but thorns and thistles spring up for me, and you say: Why do you weep? Why do you not eat and drink?

Ye sons of men, to what end are you distressed in heart? To what end do you relish such things? And why do you afflict my heart by speaking thus foolishly? You endeavour to subvert the just by the false promise, saying: Peace, peace; and there is no peace; what have you to do with peace? There is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord. I do not weep because I am not rich; because I do not abound in wine, bread, corn, and oil, as you wish to abound; but because I am in this world, and have not yet seen him, who is true peace and supreme happiness. Reach your hands to my stripes, and feel my wounds, and if you will not weep with me, let me go a little to lament my pain, before I depart from this life never more to return.

I will in the mean time sit in grief and walk in sorrow; nor shall I go forth into the world, but die in my obscure retreat, and be buried in the grave which I have dug for me. My joy is exceeding great that I have found a tomb, that I may sleep in it, and not see the wickedness which is committed on the earth. My soul is weary of my life, and my pain is daily renewed.

Therefore, my Lord God, I beg that you loose me from all the chains of sin, and moreover rescue me from the earth, because it is better for me to die than live. And what more can I do here? Days after days, and years after years pass away, but your servant is not much the better.

Continue not your unworthy servant, nor suffer him longer to wander after the vanity of this life. Like a lost sheep have I strayed; O Lord, seek your servant, for it is time.

Not my righteousness or goodness, O Lord, but your mercy and lovingkindness, are immeasurable. According to that mercy, deal with thy servant, visit me with your salvation, to the end that I may live in the society of your elect, and rejoice in the joy of your heavenly kingdom, that you may be praised with that inheritance which you have purchased with your precious blood; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever remain the holy God. Amen.

## AN EXHORTATION

### TO A SPIRITUAL PROFICIENCY.

MY DEAREST BROTHER,—Freely do I impart to you those good things wherewith the Lord has endowed his poor servant. I am very poor and dependent, but I trust the Lord's care is equally extended to you and me; therefore I entreat his loving kindness, that the charity dispersed from his holy table be made common to us both.

This day did the Lord meet his poor servant with sweetest bread from heaven. A most charming and gracious speech did he speak unto me. The reading of the Revelations sounded in my ears, and of the multitude of those mighty mysteries have I retained but one short verse. More I could not retain, but there are not a few which sound more obscurely than this.

In order to engage the affections, the Lord hath anted, that something should sound with brevity



and delight. I wish he would also grant that this be made manifest to the intellect ; for if it seem clear to the spirit, it remains obscure to the flesh.

I wish therefore, that you would become partaker of this bounty. For when we feel alike in Christ, seek and have the same object in him, then indeed are we truly inseparable companions.

Give ear and hear attentively what sounds so very sweetly, saying : " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches : to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna ; and to him will *I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.*"

2. Brother, do you hear this heavenly voice ? O would it may reach the inmost recesses of our hearts, that we may feel its virtues ! It is the word of *life*, and worthy of all men to be received. O how heavenly the voice that speaks nothing earthly ! But if the flesh comprehend it not, let the spirit, of which the whole speech is full, conceive it. It says : " The words which I speak are spirit and life, it is the spirit that enliveneth : the flesh profiteth nothing."

Therefore, the external man, carnal, vain, and arrogant, comprehends not the mysteries of heavenly revelation, as St. Paul affirmeth, saying : " The natural man perceiveth not the things which are of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, nor can he understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

He speaks therefore to the spiritual, who, by the spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh ; who hate the world, and reject the evil works of the devil. For

they, having the first fruits of the spirit, cannot be ignorant what is this hidden manna, for they have learned it rather by tasting than by reading or hearing.

Manna is given to the beloved children, who serve God the Father in love; who always promote his glory and seek his will. Hesitate not to receive this manna, which expresses the inward happiness of the soul, and consolation of the devout Christian in this life.

The sense, therefore, is consonant to the expression: "To him that overcometh will I give the hidden manna:" that is to say, to him that disdaineth the carnal, will I give the heavenly consolation; to him who rejects earthly and external possessions, will I give heavenly and internal treasures, which in their own worth, exceed all other delights whatsoever. Their value is so exceedingly unutterable, that no one is worthy to know them, unless he first learn to despise the vain and worthless pleasures of this world, for it is written: "The stupid man will not know these things, nor will the foolish man understand them."

I wish to introduce something more at large here, for the purpose of utterly subduing vices and ill habits. As God formerly rained manna on the sons of Israel in the desert, so now does he grant the grace of inward consolation to his spiritual children, to save them from temptation.

With this food were the sons of Israel fed, till they arrived at the land of promise; and whilst they traversed the world, as the elect of God, they were cherished with the food of life and understanding,

till, having departed this earth, they entered into the land of the living. The manna immediately ceased, when they began to eat of the fruit of that land. And when they were adopted into the glory of the *blessed*, they no longer required to be refreshed, after our manner, by spiritual aliment.

The bread which feeds angels and men, and that which feeds souls in glory, and travellers in grace, is one and the same. But what much affects me is, that many complain that they want manna. Many also who were wont to be refreshed by it, have lost the relish thereof; what else can be the cause of this dryness and insipidity of your palates, but that you have returned to the poor and delusive pleasures of this world?

Remember your departure from Egypt; let that day be eternally recorded as a memorial of the name of the Lord; none can doubt but the hand of the Lord was with you; otherwise you would have remained there for ever. Where then is that spirit, that primitive fervour, the firm purpose and fixed resolution and the love which death itself could not subdue?

Armed in some degree have you withdrawn from the world, since you have agreed with a steady resolution to bear all opposition, indignity, and difficulty; when you arrived in joy at Oreb, the mountain of God, to learn the law of life and discipline, and when you promised attentively to hear, and religiously to obey, the counsels of your elders.

Why are you now weary of your journey? Why do you sit on your baggage, and bemoan that you are oppressed? Now, on account of the seasons and years that have passed, ought you bring forth

of the fruit of the land of promise, grapes and pomegranates, and present them to others; and lo, even you are destitute of manna. Children of the earth, return to God and be converted; for though you have not returned corporally to the world, your hearts are, however, engrossed by various earthly desires.

Oh what a source of grief! Many spiritually depart from Egypt, cross the Red Sea, walk through the desert, carry the tabernacle and its vases, but enter not into the land of promise. They suffer almost everything that has happened to the sons of Israel, who, murmuring against Moses, lamented that they were led out of Egypt. Just so are many found at this day, who leave the world, forsake their parents and friends, lament their past sins and vices, hold the carnal pleasures in abomination, follow the unknown rule of justice when conducted by the hand of their superiors, behold the life of Christ who was crucified, and with obedience and self-denial carry that delightful yoke which the Lord imposes; insomuch, that they all are prepared with patience and ardour to undergo labour and abstinence, mild to reproaches, humble to indignities, patient to corrections, and quite undismayed by disgrace or opposition. But all do not persevere in that ardour; for, after some period of their migration (that is, of their conversion) is past, they become less cautious or careful of their journey, fall into various temptations and disorders of the passions, so that some repent that they have ever set out, and others deliberate and devise means of returning. But some, though they remain from length of time and practice, work like bond servants, because possessing

little fervour or affection toward those things which they learn as necessary to be done; they consider all things laborious and difficult, because they have not the hidden manna of true charity. Those people look upon heaven to be brass, and upon earth to be iron, because they learn not to contemplate the heavens, nor cultivate their hearts with the labour of virtue and devotion.

However, they say that they are well disposed to be devout and virtuous, they also could wish to have conquered their passions; but a good disposition alone will not do, if labour and exertion be wanting. You ought to labour, you ought to exert the force of nature, as the Lord saith: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent carry it by force." The greatest efforts are necessary, and you know that the saints have not purchased the kingdom of God by sleep or idleness.

Wherefore do you tarry? Why are you not armed against the passions, that you may obtain the necessary virtues, and be found worthy to enjoy heavenly consolations? The longer you tarry, by so much the worse will your condition always be; nor will you without labour and pain ever obtain the wished for rest: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Sloth and negligence possess you; but arm yourselves first against these vices, and fight the battles of the Lord.

Why do you neglect your own improvement? Truly your labour is for your own advantage and for your own peace. The scripture says: "I have had a little labour, but found much peace." But

perhaps you will reply : Who can always contend with the vices and passions ? They are many, and, in our opinion, insurmountable ; who can possibly bear such great vexation ? Hear, ye unbelieving and ill affected ! Ye effeminate soldiers and lazy servants, hear ! Ye look to the toil and consider the battle ; but why take no account of the reward and victory ? What is all the severity of temporary labour, compared to the bliss of eternal rest. And what signifies a little trouble to the consolation of a good conscience ?

O would you but begin, and with fortitude and sincerity determine either to conquer or die, certainly, with the help of God, you would find that quite easy which you now think insurmountable. Scarcely has there been any one found so vicious, that diligence and perseverance in doing good have not procured for him the reward of virtue. It appears difficult to you to conquer your passions ; but unless they be conquered, your hearts will never enjoy the true repose.

When others are with God in devotion and peace, you will be in sorrow, distress, and toil, both at home and abroad ; never will you possess security and true joy unless you utterly annihilate the carnal desires. If the godliness of the saints and the piety of many more cannot influence you, let your wretched helpless condition, and the sentence of divine vengeance terrify you, which saith : “ I will heap evils on this people, and against them will I shoot all my arrows ; with famine shall they be wasted away, and birds of prey of most voracious appetites shall devour them.” These little verses threaten with due severity. I wish they could reform those habits you



have of old contracted, that, being made new and fervent, the promise of the Holy Ghost may every day add both to your joy and improvement, for it says: "To him that overcometh will I give of the hidden manna." If you be willing and hear me, you shall eat of the fruit of the good land; instead of the thorn shall the most beauteous rose grow up for you; and instead of thistles the fairest lilies. These are great encouragements, sweet and comfortable to those who wish to make a spiritual proficiency.

Therefore, man of God, let not a multitude of vices confound or distress you. Believe in God, hope in him, and you shall be a greater conqueror than before: "The Lord will fight your battles, and you shall be silent." Do you understand this? The Lord himself will give you fortitude to resist anger, shake off sloth, and restrain the concupiscent mind, and you shall be silent; because you must not ascribe this power to yourself, nor shall you become proud in consequence of it, but surrender yourself wholly and entirely to God, who stands on the right hand of the poor. Also seclude yourself as much as possible from men, and confess that you are weak and helpless. If any rise up against you, and say what you do not wish to hear, be thou, notwithstanding, patient and silent; God will answer to you for the injury you have sustained; for he is just, and will suffer no hurtful word to pass with impunity. How can the malice of another hurt you? If he be enraged against you, if he slander and revile you, he injures himself more than he injures you, because he betrays his own wickedness.

If you have been innocent, and have continued

to be patient, he has done you no harm, but rather increased your merit. You will appear to the wise to be still clearer by the reproach, and more approved in the virtue of patience.

As long as a man continues pious and undisturbed, the depravity or ill language of another cannot hurt him.

The mental qualities of every man appear in his external deportment; because, if you be plain, upright, and in fear of God, none can deprive you of your goodness, integrity, and peace, unless you voluntarily surrender them.

That patience is not great, which trifles can disturb. Learn to be at least silent to injury; for it is prudent to be silent in times of evil. Let him who desires to conquer present himself vanquished. Consider the crown which you shall acquire by your patience, and not the injury done you. Study how to reclaim another, rather than how to indulge your zeal against him, even in the cause of justice, or what reply to make against him. Do you forgive, though he should not, since he who provokes another is generally more in fault than he who bears the provocation. It is peculiar to the miserable to complain, and to the impatient to be too much prone to anger, and to attribute the cause to others.

Therefore willingly appear the culprit, that you may be made innocent in the presence of God. First begin with yourself, and then you shall be able also to reclaim others. How wisely and properly should you act, would you exert your zeal against your own intemperance, and first correct in yourself what you reprove in others.

Therefore, when you are engaged at the faults of

others, what avails it to you to take the mote from your brother's eye, and not check the progress of your own violence? But his fault appears to you not a mote but a beam; but take care lest that which you enviously pronounce a beam, should appear in the presence of God no more than a mote. Trust not too much to your own judgment, because you are a man and not God. Whether the import of a matter be great or small, it will be always your interest rather to take care of yourself, because you are a sinner, and want a guardian. Therefore you condemn yourself when you do those things, for which you pass judgment on others.

How am I profitted, if by my words I heal others and remain still in subjection to my own passions? Happy is it for him who can profit by my vices, but wo unto me, the destroyer of my own salvation. It is not the sign of a kind heart rashly to reprove others, or in reproof to be immoderate; you ought to defer the severity of censure until your anger subsides into mildness, and your bitterness of zeal into sweetness of disposition; and perhaps you will then see that he whom you censured is not so much in fault, and will rather excuse him for that which suddenly excited your indignation. To your own vicious disposition will you justly attribute that you could not bear a trifling injury, and you will be also more sorry for the unjust censure, than for his fault. You, who require that your weakness should be borne by others, ought to be ashamed that you have never learned to bear the little failings of your brother. Why do you not show that mercy to others, which you expect for yourself? Look to yourself, and

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dread, lest you be more criminal by your indignation and impatience, than your brother by his transgression. Perhaps he lamented his fault as soon as he understood it, and determined to be careful for the future; but you, divested of patience or tenderness, have neither considered your crimes nor lamented them. By the charity which he bears in his own heart, you still enjoy his good opinion, and he thinks nothing evil of you; but rather subjects himself to you, and allows your jurisdiction over him.

Take care, then, lest he who appears to be the sinner, precede you in the kingdom of God; and you, for your arrogance of justice, become like the proud Pharisee, whom his master reproached for his insolence to the humble publican.

Behold, my dearest brother, you have now heard in what manner you ought to subdue yourself, and exert your zeal against your own vices; therefore, study your proficiency more and more, and always lop off some portion of your vicious habits.

But, as negligence is wont to foment vices, and discard the virtues, so does diligence overturn and expel the most inveterate evils. If labour attends the battle at its commencement, notwithstanding, when you see the enemy by degrees falling, you will be consoled by the happy event. We are much embarrassed because we do not exert the force of nature to the utmost. O what labours do men sustain for the sake of earthly possessions, but we become quite faint in respect of eternal happiness.

The sailor goes to sea, the merchant traverses kingdoms, the soldier goes to war, and the husbandman tills the ground, and yet they cannot without

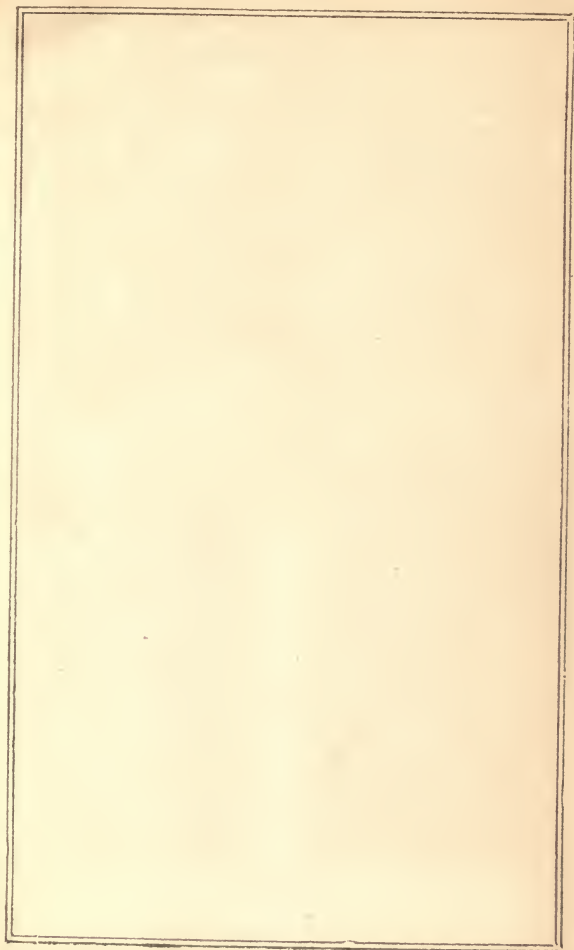
great labour acquire honours and riches. How then can we expect, without great diligence, to attain the virtues?

To make a beginning to-day, to add a little to-morrow, and so on every day to add one virtue to another, and one good purpose to another, will completely render the man virtuous, devout, pure, sanctified, and religious, dear to God, and grateful to man.

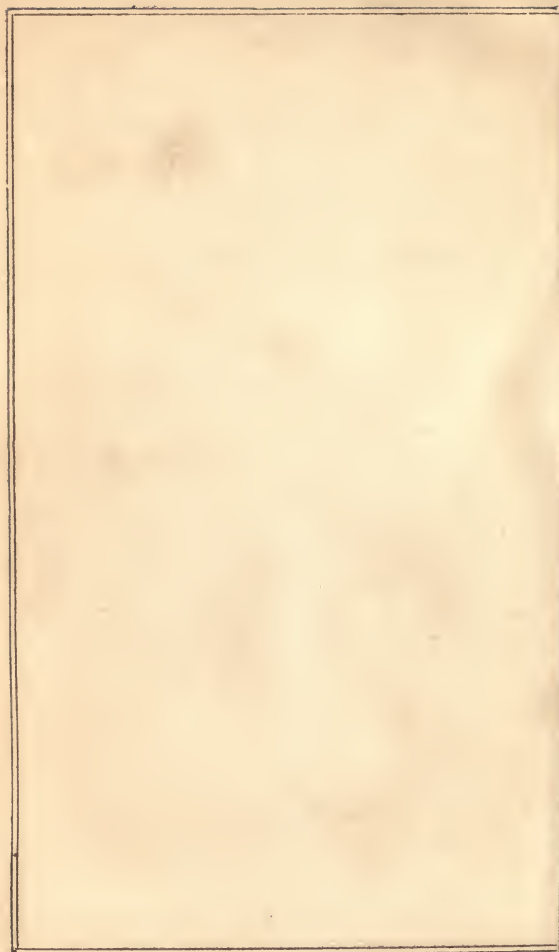
By this means a man purchases the "*new name in the white stone*," because when he has utterly subdued his vices, he is rendered pure within, and often enjoys the comforts of heavenly delight, which are ever unknown to the carnal and indolent.

Let us therefore diligently revolve in our minds, the present little verse, which disclaims detestable sloth, and inflames us and our brethren with the love of spiritual proficiency, to the end that our vices may be healed, and the gifts of heavenly virtue increased in us. Nor will the Holy Ghost disappoint the hopes of his faithful servants; he even encourages them to a valiant contention, saying: "To him that overcometh will I give the hidden manna."

THE END.











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